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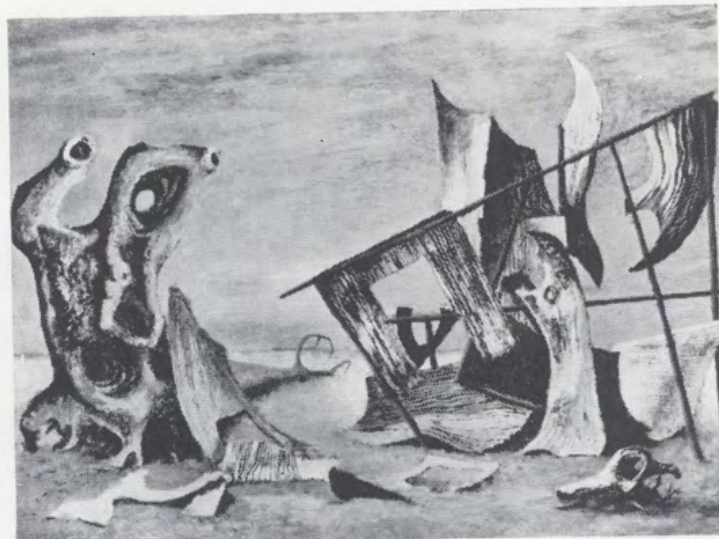
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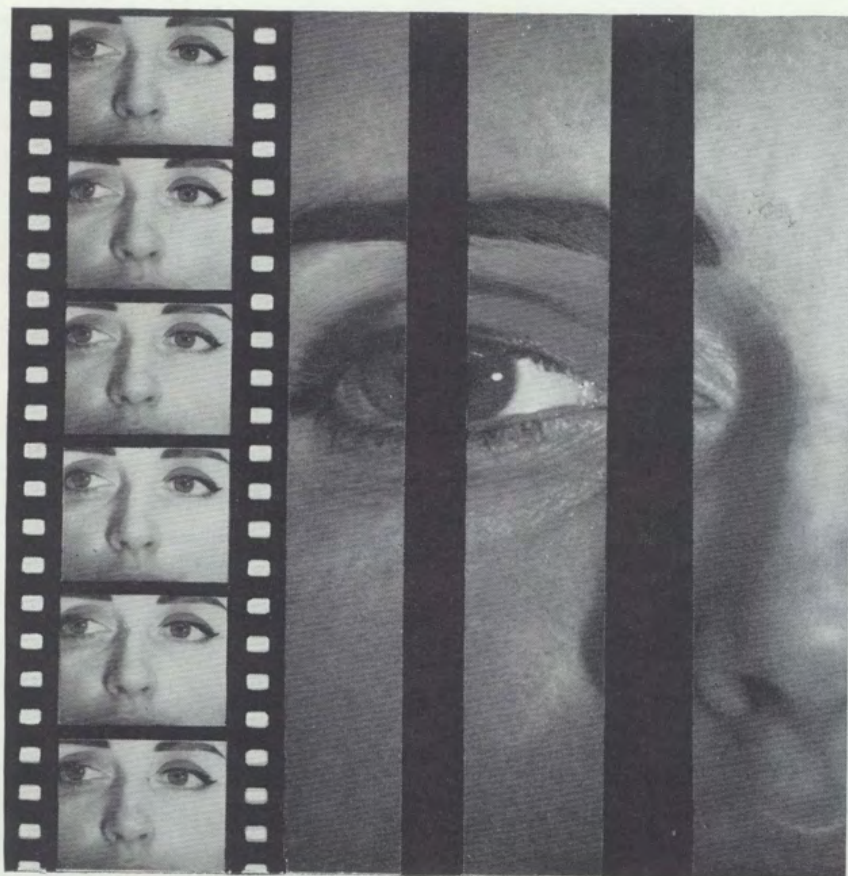
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THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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△ VIRIDIANA



○ MARIENBAD



• VIVRE SA VIE



THE FRONT PAGE

A MAGAZINE LIKE SIGHT AND SOUND has to work on the assumption that readers see, or at any rate have access to, the kind of films we are writing about: that there is this much necessary common ground between critic and reader. But, as letters from readers remind us, this isn't always the case. Film critics are based on London; the National Film Theatre is in London; reproachfully, correspondents in the provinces regret their own inability simply to keep in touch with what modern cinema is all about.

How wide, precisely, is the distribution of continental films in Britain? Everyone agrees that there has been a substantial increase during the last ten years both in the number of art houses and in the size of their audiences. But how far are the provinces still out of touch with London? We have conducted an investigation on such a limited scale that it can hardly be dignified by the name of research, or even regarded as what serious researchers would call a pilot project. We simply chose three films, *Viridiana*, *L'Année Dernière à Marienbad* and *Vivre sa Vie*, which seemed to us of outstanding quality and varying commercial potential, and asked the distributors concerned to tell us precisely where in the United Kingdom they had been screened commercially. The films have been around long enough to have been shown, we assume, by most of the cinemas that intend to screen them. And we are extremely grateful to Miracle Films (*Viridiana* and *Vivre sa Vie*) and Compton Cameo (*Marienbad*) for so co-operatively giving us the information we asked for.

The results appear in outline on the map opposite. Total number of theatrical bookings to date: 79 for *Viridiana* (16 of these in Greater London), 46 for *Marienbad* (10 in London) and 37 for *Vivre sa Vie* (5 in London). All three films could have been seen in most big cities, in university towns such as Oxford (repeated bookings of *Marienbad*) and Cambridge, and in some slightly less predictable places like Camborne or Colwyn Bay. It would be foolhardy to try to draw even tentative conclusions from such flimsy evidence, but it is tempting at least to note the concentration of bookings (for *Viridiana* especially) in the industrial north, and the blank spaces in the Home Counties. London, presumably, acts as the magnet here, so that people who work in London are more likely to stay on in the evening to see a film than to hunt it down months later at their local cinema.

In spite of the blank areas on the map, the pattern seems on the whole less gloomy than some of our correspondents make out. Respectable-sized audiences have at any rate had access to these three films, and obviously to others like them. There is in existence the nucleus, at least, for a cross-country chain of art houses, although the limited number of prints of continental films must mean that many cinemas have to wait their turn for a booking. Our original intention was to look at things in a more competitive spirit, by studying the

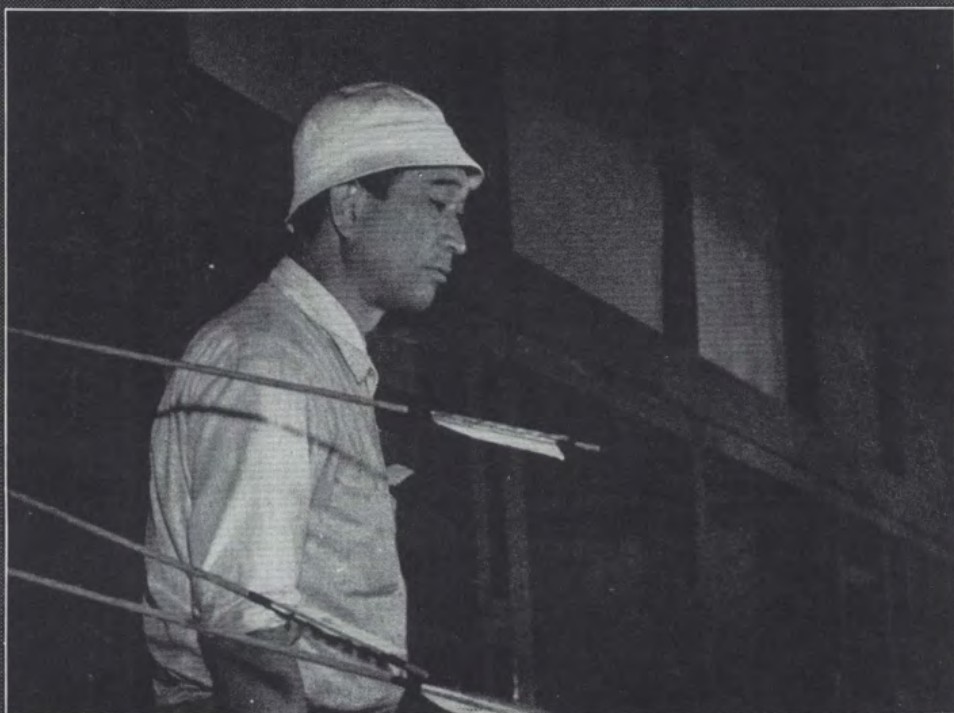
exhibition pattern for selected British and American films; but here we were frustrated by the reluctance of distributors to pass on the facts. At how many towns in the United Kingdom were *Dr. No*, or *Lolita*, or *The Manchurian Candidate* shown? This, unfortunately, is classified information.

It must be generally agreed, however, that the potential audience for quality films—English-speaking as well as continental—is a good deal larger than the number of people who actually get to see them. You have to want to see a film very much indeed to face a twenty mile drive, or a complicated bus journey. And there must be many places, all over the country, where an audience exists for the right films, but not a big enough public to support a cinema week in and week out, to put up with the bad in order to be able to see the good when and where they want to.

It is tolerably encouraging to know that *Vivre sa Vie* could have been seen in Torpoint, *Marienbad* in Utttoxeter, *Viridiana* in Merthyr Tydfil. And of course there are always the film societies, still doing a great deal to extend the range of coverage. Compton Cameo Films gave us a list of 31 places where *Marienbad* had been screened non-theatrically, including such outposts as Holt, in Norfolk, and Broughty Ferry, in Scotland. Many of the film societies, all the same, are bound themselves to be in major population centres. It is the people who live in the country or the smaller towns, the victims of railway closures and indifferent transport, who are getting a raw deal. And it is difficult to see what exhibitors of specialised films can do about it, eager though they must be to corral any potential audience for their wares. This scattered minority is the public that television might be expected to reach, if it could do more to extend and regulate its continental film screenings.

What seems to be needed is some systematic research, on a scale large enough for valid conclusions to be drawn. Local authorities have the power, if they are prepared to use it, to give the cinema the kind of support that some have extended to the theatre. Beaconsfield is a case of a town where the council acted to acquire and operate a cinema which might otherwise have gone out of business. Except in large towns, the really big cinema has become an extravagant anachronism; small cinemas, free to be tolerably specialised in their policy, and more attractive to customers than the chilly tombs of a dead age of film-going, are what many people must want, and what local authorities, given sufficient incentive, might help to provide. Yet to gauge the demand, and to find out whether the thing might be commercially viable, calls for a major operation in market research, which would have to be centrally organised and financed. All the evidence suggests that there is a sizeable audience which the cinema, as at present organised, is unable to reach. The job is to locate that audience; and to try to fill in some of those spaces on the map.

KURROSAWA



ON



KURROSAWA

gathered, edited & annotated by DONALD
RICHIE

KUROSAWA DOES NOT LIKE to talk about his films, nor is he fond of discussing film theory. Once, when I asked him about the meaning of one of his pictures, he said: "If I could have said it in words, I would have—then I wouldn't have needed to make the picture."

Recently, however, Kurosawa expressed an interest in looking back over the body of his work, and these are the results. I have deleted nothing and have only added to the material when it seemed relevant.

SUGATA SANSHIRO

(Sanshiro Sugata/Judo Saga/
La Légende de judo), 1943, Toho

I REMEMBER THE FIRST time I said *cut*—it was as though it was not my own voice at all. From the second time on it was me all right. When I think of this first picture I remember most that I had a good time making it. And at this period it was hard to have a good time making films because it was wartime and you weren't allowed to say anything worth saying. Back then everyone thought that the real Japanese-style film should be as simple as possible. I disagreed and got away with disagreeing—that much I could say. Still, I was anything but sure of myself. I remember doing a scene with the heroine, Yukiko Todoriki, and we decided together how it should be done. I remember when I saw an advertisement for the novel this film was based on, I intuitively thought it would be right for me. When it came out I went to the producer's house and asked him to buy the rights. He did so and two days later every major studio was wanting it. It was ideal for an entertainment film and that was about all we were allowed to make back in 1943.

I remember the first day I met Shimura [Takashi Shimura was later the woodcutter in *Rashomon*, the hero of *Ikiru*, and early became a member of the Kurosawa "group"]—he was standing on the lawn of the studio and I didn't recognise him. He was wearing a very old and very shabby hat and I remember thinking that the hat suited him extraordinarily well. At the same time I met Fujita [Susumu Fujita was the hero of this film, and later appeared in *The Hidden Fortress* and other Kurosawa films] and Ryunosuke Tsunagata who was playing the villain. I remember that the critics said he overacted and stole the show. That is not true. He did not overact. He certainly stole the show, however. I told him to. I was much more interested in his character than in the hero.

ICHIBAN UTSUKUSHIKU

(Most Beautifully/Le Plus Doux), 1943, Toho

THIS IS ONE OF Kinoshita's favourite films. [Keisuke Kinoshita is known abroad mainly for *The Legend of Narayama*.] He has always liked it best and I still like it myself. It was my own story and in it I wanted to portray women in a group—a kind of everyday documentary of their lives. All the actresses were told not to use their personal idiosyncrasies and I told them to play it like amateurs. I made all the girls live together in a dormitory during the filming, and I made them run a lot to get them tired—to show themselves on the screen. It is interesting that, after the film, one after the other got married and all became exemplary wives. It was rumoured that I was in love with my star but that was not true. I too got married after it was over, however. I married Yoko Yaguchi.

SUGATA SANSHIRO ZOKU

(Sanshiro Sugata—Part Two), 1944, Toho

THIS FILM DID NOT interest me in the slightest. I had already done it once before. All I remember is that I took Masayuki

Mori off the stage for it. [Mori was the husband in *Rashomon*, and also appeared in *The Idiot* and *The Bad Sleep Well*; he still maintains a career in the theatre.] Again what interested me was not the hero but his opponent. It was an odd film.

TORA NO O O FUMU OTOKOTACHI

(The Men Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail/
Walkers on Tigers' Tails/Sur la Piste du Tigre/
Die Tigerfährte), 1944, Toho, released 1953

I HAD ORIGINALLY WANTED to make a costume picture to be called *Doko Kono Yari* [the film—title untranslatable—was never made] and the script was ready but we couldn't make it. No horses. So we made *Kanjincho* instead. [*Tora no O* is based on the Kabuki play *Kanjincho*]. I wrote the script in one night. There was only one stage-set. All the rest was location. This was an order. But, even so, it was much easier to shoot this way. Enoken was very easy to work with [Enoken played the stupid porter who almost gives the plot away: this character is not in the original play; Kurosawa used him to give the reactions of the contemporary Japanese and it was he who contributed all of the comedy in this short film] and this was because he had, after all, had a long career on the stage, and had been trained by Kajiro Yamamoto. [Yamamoto also trained Kurosawa, who was his assistant for the 1941 *Uma* (Horses); together they made the 1946 *Those Who Make Tomorrow*.] It was later shown to, among others, Michael Powell, who expressed himself as pleased. I wanted to remake this film with more sets, lots more technique. Hayasaka and I talked about this project, but never did anything about it. Then he died. His death ruined that as well.

[One of Kurosawa's closest friends was Fumio Hayasaka, the composer who contributed all of the film scores up to and including *Seven Samurai*. Kurosawa has said that the reason for the "failure" of *Ikimono no Kiroku* was because he was deprived of Hayasaka's help, which was much more than that which a composer usually gives a director. They used to think up story ideas together and Hayasaka often helped with the script as well. It is unfortunate that the West is mostly familiar with his music for *Rashomon*, which is quite untypical. He had prepared a Japanese score for the picture and it was Kurosawa who insisted that he wanted something else, something more like the *Boléro*—which is just what he received.]

I knew Hayasaka very well during this early Occupation period, though I did not know Kurosawa at that time. He was an extremely gentle, extremely intelligent man with thick glasses and wild hair. He used to come to listen to new records I would get from America and I remember his excitement when he first heard the Berg Violin Concerto. His own music was highly adventurous and I remember the première of his Piano Concerto which stunned the 1946 audience. Later, he took me to Toho one afternoon and we watched them make a film and I talked with the young director. The film was *Drunken Angel* and the director was Kurosawa.]

ASU O TSUKURU HITOBITO

(Those Who Make Tomorrow/Ceux qui font les
Lendemain) Co-directed with Kajiro Yamamoto
and Hideo Sekigawa, 1946, Toho

THIS FILM IS NOT REALLY MINE. Not the other directors' either. It was really made by the labour union and is an excellent example of why a committee-made film is no good. I did my part in a week. Even today when I hear the band music on May Day I feel very, very sleepy. Still, it wasn't too bad for just a week's work.

WAGA SEISHUN NI KOINASHI

(No Regrets for my Youth/
Je ne regrette pas ma Jeunesse), 1946, Toho

THE ORIGINAL SCRIPT WAS a lot better than the one we had to use. Eijiro Saita wrote it and told what really happened to Hidemi Ozaki, how he was suspected of spying, how he died in prison. The trouble was that there was another script which Kiyoshi Kusuda wanted to use and there was a certain amount of resemblance. The scenario committee told me that I was "standing in the way of a young director." This I didn't want to be doing, but I told them that simply because two directors were involved the films would be different. That is the way movies are, the difference comes from the director, not the story. In fact, I said, I wanted to make a better film than he would. This they did not like and so I had to change the whole second half of my script. Saita refused, I begged, and somehow we started shooting.

The critics were ferocious about the character of the woman in this picture [the heroine, Setsuko Hara, goes to work on a farm, to forget what has happened, turning her back upon social "responsibilities"] but it was only here and in *Rashomon* that I ever fully and fairly portrayed a woman. Of course, all my women are rather strange, I agree. But this woman I wanted to show as the new Japan. I was right, I still think, to show a woman who lived by her own feelings. The critics hated her as though she were a man. But she wasn't—that was the point.

At any rate, it wasn't much of a production—the labour union got in the way. Still, it was the first film in which I had something to say and in which my feelings were used. Everyone disagreed. They said I should go back to the style of *Sugata*. Look, I said, if I could have made anything better than *Sugata* at the time I would have done it—what do I have to go back to? Then they said it was technically more proficient. It wasn't. Besides, techniques are there only to support a director's intentions. If he relies on techniques his original thought cannot help but be cramped. Techniques do not enlarge a director, they limit him and they tend to undermine the basic idea which should prevail.

SUBARSHIKI NICHIOBI

(Wonderful Sunday/
Un splendide Dimanche), 1946, Toho

I GOT THE IDEA FOR THIS FILM from an old Griffith picture about a couple after the first war who plant potatoes. Someone steals the crop but they don't give up; they try again. [Naturally, the "idea" was not literal. Kurosawa, always interested in people trying again and again, made it into the story of a young couple who, despite everything, manage to enjoy themselves on Sunday—their one day off.] Though this film won me the prize for the best director of the year, I think I did not make it nearly freely enough. It is certainly by no means my favourite picture. I had a lot of things to say and I got them all mixed up. I remembered this in *Drunken Angel* and kept my eyes open.

YOIDORE TENSHI

(Drunken Angel/L'Ange ivre/
Der trunkene Engel), 1948, Toho

IN THIS PICTURE I FINALLY discovered myself. It was my picture: I was doing it and no one else. Part of this was thanks to Mifune. [Though Toshiro Mifune had been in several films this was his first starring role and it resulted in almost instant fame.] Shimura played the doctor beautifully but I found that I could not control Mifune. When I saw



TOSHIRO MIFUNE IN "DRUNKEN ANGEL".

this, I let him do as he wanted, let him play the part freely. At the same time I was worried because, if I did not control him, the picture would be quite different from what I had wanted. It was a real dilemma. Still, I did not want to smother that vitality. In the end, although the title refers to the doctor, it is Mifune that everyone remembers.

I had seen him in Taniguchi's *To the End of the Silver Mountains* but had no idea that he would be like this. His reactions are extraordinarily swift. If I say one thing, he understands ten. He reacts very quickly to the director's intentions. Most Japanese actors are the opposite of this and so I wanted Mifune to cultivate this gift.

It was from here on that the critics started calling me a "journalistic" director, meaning that I interested myself in "topical themes." Actually, I have always thought of films as a kind of journalism, if journalism means a series of happenings, usually contemporary, which can be shaped into a film. At the same time I know that a timely subject does not make an interesting film, if that is all the film has. One ought to make a film in such a way that the original idea, no matter where it comes from, remains the most important thing; and the feeling that one had at that moment of having the idea is important. Timely then, in my sense, is the opposite of sensational.

One of the reasons for the extreme popularity of this film at the time was that there was no competition—no other films showed an equal interest in people. We had difficulty with one of the characters: that of the doctor himself. Jin Uekusa and I rewrote his part over and over again. Still, he wasn't interesting. We had almost given up when it occurred to me that he was just too good to be true, he needed a defect, a vice. This is why we made him an alcoholic. At that time most film characters were shining white or blackest black. We made the doctor grey.

For this film I had originally wanted to use the *Drei-groschenoper* music but we could not get the rights, so we used cheap guitar music as a substitute. This was the first picture on which Hayasaka worked with me; and from the first we agreed on everything. Like using that vapid *Cuckoo Waltz* for the saddest part of the film. We thought of it separately but together, and after inspiration had struck us both, I remember, we shook hands. It was until that time music and pictures. We wanted both to contribute to each other. It is easy to talk about this but extremely difficult to do.

SHIZUKA NARU KETTO

(The Silent Duel/Le duel silencieux), 1949, Toho

ORIGINALLY, I SAW THE stage play, done by Chiaki Minoaru, and I thought it would be good for Mifune. He had been a gangster, now *he* could be the doctor. This was also the first production of an independent unit I had formed, and it was the kind of film that a young production company could more easily do. Still, the people who work in movie studios are pretty much the same, and I have certainly never had any lack of confidence.

Yet, when I remember it, it seems to me that only the early scenes in the field hospital have any validity. This is because I didn't *describe* things too well in this picture. When the locale moved back to Japan somehow the drama left the film.

I am the kind of person who works violently, throwing myself into it. I also like hot summers, cold winters, heavy rains and snows, and I think my pictures show this. I like extremes because I find them most alive. I have always found that men who think like men, who act like men, who most *are* themselves, are always better . . . certainly they work better.

The synopsis of the film was sent to CIE [this was during the American Occupation and all film scripts were supervised by the Civil Information and Education Section, lest "feudal content" be included] and was then sent to the Medical Section, where the doctor in charge informed me that I would absolutely terrify the people of syphilis and they would not come for aid. [In the film the doctor accidentally contracts syphilis while operating. In the original version of the film the tertiary stages of the disease were to be shown.] In addition a number of Japanese doctors agreed that it was "un-medical." If you show a man going insane from syphilis, they said, it would not be true. Anyway, the script was approved up to that point and so it could not be helped—Mifune did not go insane in the end. Because of this, however, there were many script problems. I decided to make it a tragic love story and that, tellingly, was the most difficult part of the picture to film.

NORA INU

(Stray Dog/Chien enragé), 1949, Shintoho.

I AM VERY FOND OF Georges Simenon and I wanted to do a film in his manner. I wanted to, but I failed. Everyone liked the picture, but I do not. It is too *technical*—all that technique and I had not one real thought in it. Shimura is quite good in it but I had not seen very deeply into his character; nor anyone else's for that matter. If I saw into anyone at all it was the murderer. This part was played by Ko Kimura and it was his first part in a film. [Kurosawa used him later in both *Seven Samurai*—the love-struck warrior—and *High and Low*.]

I remember the difficulties we had with the music. Hayasaka and I went from one used record store to the next trying to find just the right music for the scene with the showgirl where the radio is playing. The record had to be old and scratched and the music had to be right. I remember we were so happy when we finally found that ancient rendering of *La Paloma*. During the scene the dubbing was so difficult that I remember my sound man actually cried with rage and frustration.

Other troubles were in shooting. There is the scene where the detective is wandering around looking for his pistol (this story is true, by the way, the original idea for the film came when I heard about a real detective who was so unfortunate during those days of shortages as to lose his pistol), and originally he was to wander through four sections of the city: Shinjuku, Asakusa, Shibuya, and Ueno. It was to be shot in sections on consecutive days. At this point a typhoon descended upon us, the producers asked us to hurry, we did,

and all of this interesting material never got filmed.

I made this film in an unusual way. After hearing the original anecdote I wrote a novel (unpublished) about it. From this I had thought it would be easy to make the script. Not at all. Writing the script took just as much time as it usually does. Time was a problem in another way. Movies have their own internal time—motion-time. In writing a scenario one is always surprised at how much longer it takes than the actual filming does, but this is the way it is. You write a scenario with a different part of your mind, as it were. And you have to remember the context of each shot and make use of it. I remember that the first scene in the film was to have been the opening scene in the police station. We saw the rushes and it was just no good for the opening. I re-read my novel and finally understood why. In the novel it explained itself; in the film there was no context for it to exist in. The novel had begun with a number of details—for example, that it was the hottest day of the year. I filmed these hot-day details, then put in the station scene and the talk about the gun which follows; and it all worked.

SHUBUN

(Scandal), 1950, Shochiku

THIS IS A PROTEST FILM. It is directly connected with the rise of the press in Japan and their habitual confusion of freedom with licence. Personal privacy is never respected and the scandal sheets are the worst offenders. I felt outrage that this should be so. [Though Kurosawa's protest had no personal involvement. He has for so long remained cool to the press that even simple details about his home life are not published. He has never appeared on TV, from which no Japanese celebrity is ever entirely immune; and he dislikes reading even favourable criticism of his work.] Still, the script wouldn't work right, and no matter how hard we worked it did not satisfy us. Then I thought of the character that became the lawyer in the film and this solved the problem. It is interesting how I thought of it. About ten years earlier I had been drinking in a bar in Shibuya and got talking to the man next to me. He was an older man and he was taking some food to his daughter in the hospital and had stopped off for a drink on the way. We talked about her. He adored her, said there was no one in the world like her. For some reason or other this apparently impressed me. In making this picture I thought, all of a sudden, of the character needed for the lawyer, and went on and made the film. When I looked at it, I found what I had done. The lawyer was the very image of this old man: he talked like him, acted like him.

The part was played by Shimura and was a much more interesting character than that he had played in *Drunken Angel*. I think this was because the doctor was someone I had thought up; but the lawyer had been living in the back of my head, waiting to come out.

In the film we have the daughter die. At that point Hayasaka insisted we use the trumpet. The trumpet? I wondered. And until I saw it I did not know how right he was. I still remember that scene—music and image were one. It taught me an enormous amount.

RASHOMON

1950, Daiei

I WAS SUPPOSED to make a film for Daiei. At that time Shinobu Hashimoto [with whom Kurosawa later worked on *Ikiru* and many other films] had a number of available scenarios. One of them appealed to me but it was too short and had only three episodes in it. All my friends liked it very much, but Daiei did not understand it. They asked: What is it about? I made it longer, put on a beginning and ending—and eventually they agreed to make it. Thus Daiei joined



"RASHOMON": BANDIT AND NOBLEMAN.

those—Shochiku for *The Idiot*, Toho for *I Live in Fear*—who were brave enough to try something different. [This is charitable of Kurosawa. Actually Daiei was fairly adamant in its reluctance to understand. The head of the studio walked out on the first screening and, until the picture began winning prizes abroad, was fond of telling the press how little he understood; Shochiku, of course, butchered *The Idiot*.]

I think Machiko Kyo was marvellous in the film . . . so forceful. And it took about a month of work to get that. After we had finished I wanted to work with her again but never had the opportunity. [Until recently Miss Kyo was exclusively contracted by Daiei, and Daiei never invited Kurosawa to make another film.] We were staying in Kyoto, waiting for the set to be finished. While there we ran off some 16 mm. prints to amuse ourselves. One of them was a Martin Johnson jungle film in which there was a shot of a lion roaming around. I noticed the shot and told Mifune that that was just what I wanted him to be. At the same time Mori had seen downtown a jungle picture in which a black leopard was shown. We all went to see it. When the leopard came on Machiko was so upset that she hid her face. I saw and recognised the gesture—it was just what I wanted for the young wife.

Another thing about this film. I like silent pictures and always have. They are often so much more beautiful than sound pictures are. Perhaps they have to be. At any rate, I wanted to restore some of this beauty. I thought of it, I remember, this way: one of the techniques of modern painting is simplification, I must therefore simplify this film.

We had our share of troubles in making the picture. After one reel was edited there was a studio fire, and another one during dubbing. I'm not happy when I think back to those times. Also, I did not know that the film was being sent to Venice. And it certainly would not have been sent if Giuliana Stramigioli (then head of Unitalia Film) had not seen and liked it.

The Japanese are always terribly critical of Japanese films, so it is not too surprising that a foreigner should be responsible for this film having been sent. It was the same way with Japanese woodcuts; foreigners first appreciated them. We always think too little of our own things. Actually, *Rashomon* wasn't all that good. When I say this then people say to me: You Japanese always think too little of your own

things. Why don't you stand up for your film? What are you so afraid of?

The thing that most surprised me about the film was the camerawork. Kazuo Miyagawa [photographer of *Ugetsu*, *Kagi*, and, later, *Yojimbo*] was worrying about whether it was good enough. Shimura had known him from way back and told me about his fears. I saw the first day's rushes and I knew. He was absolutely perfect.

HAKUCHI

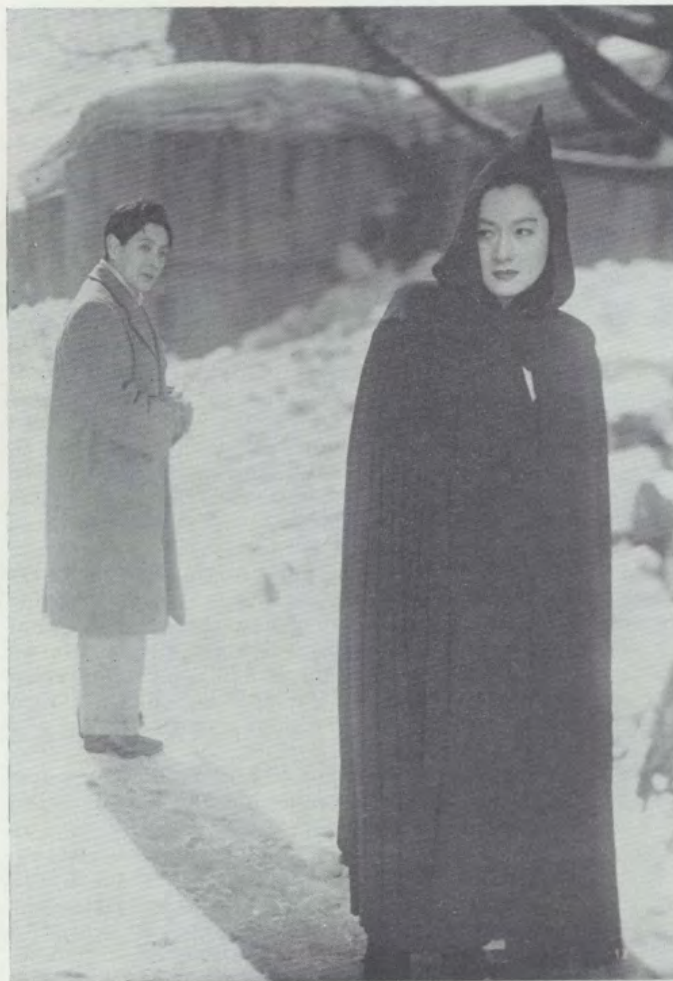
(*The Idiot*), 1951, Shochiku

I HAD WANTED TO MAKE this film since before *Rashomon*. Since I was little I'd read Dostoevsky and had thought this book would make a wonderful film. Naturally you cannot compare me to him, but he is still my favourite author, he is the one who writes most honestly about human existence. And I think that when I made this picture I really understood him. He seems terribly subjective, but then you come to the resolution and there is no more objective author writing.

I tried something like this in one of the scenes, when the Prince (in the original) tells Anastasia how good she is. She laughed. I had Setsuko Hara do it just as Dostoevsky had written it. Mori was watching and he was surprised. He liked it but it surprised him. This was just what I wanted.

Making the film was very hard work—it was difficult to make. At times I felt as though I wanted to die. Dostoevsky is heavy enough, and now I was under him—I knew just how those enormous *sumi* wrestlers feel. All the same it was marvellous experience for me.

"THE IDIOT".





A SCENE FROM "IKIRU".

People have said the film is a failure. I don't think so. At least, as entertainment, I don't think it is a failure. Of all my films, people wrote me most about this one. If it had been as bad as all that, they wouldn't have written. I trust my audience. They understood what I was saying. It was a new kind of melodrama [in Japan the word *melodrama* has no nuance of the derogatory; we should perhaps use the term psychological-drama, with the understanding that psychology is shown by action] and this the audience understood. That is why I wanted to make it at Shochiku. [That is, Shochiku had a reputation for making action-films of the *melodrama* variety. Even so, perhaps this company was not the best choice. Kurosawa neglects to note that the company asked him to cut the film by half and he made his famous reply: If you want to cut it, you had better cut it lengthwise.] If a director does not make a habit of lying to his audience, he can trust them.

The reviews were terrible [and those from America when it was shown, more or less uncut, in 1963 were equally bad] and if I had not made this film perhaps critics would not have had it so in for me. But, on thinking it over, I suppose that any director ought at least once to have been roundly attacked and embarrassed. One should be brave enough to risk this kind of "mistake". Nowadays no one does. Directors are too smart. They avoid this kind of failure. Yet, to make a failure surely is no disgrace. Still, I would have been happy if at least one critic had admired something about it. Certainly Mifune and Yoshiko Kuga were fine enough.

IKIRU

(*Living/To Live/Doomed/Vivre/Vivre enfin un seul jour/Leben!*), 1952, Toho

WHAT I REMEMBER BEST here is the long wake sequence that ends the film, where—from time to time—we see scenes in the hero's later life. Originally I wanted music all under this long section. I talked it over with Hayasaka and we decided on it and he wrote the score. Yet when it came time to dub, no matter how we did it, the scenes and music simply did not fit. So I thought about it for a long time and then took all the music out. I remember how disappointed Hayasaka was. He just sat there, not saying anything, and the rest of the day he tried to be cheerful. I was sorry I had to do it, yet I had to. There is no way now of telling him how I felt—he is gone.

He was a fine man. It was as though he (with his glasses) were blind and I was deaf. We worked so well together because one's weakness was the other's strength. We had been together ten years and then he died. It was not only my own loss—it was music's loss as well. You don't meet a person like that twice in your life.

[Kurosawa has mentioned elsewhere the genesis of the idea that resulted in *Ikiru*: Occasionally I think of my death... then I think, how could I ever bear to take a final breath, while living a life like this, how could I leave it? There is, I feel, so much more for me to do—I keep feeling I have lived so little yet. Then I become thoughtful, but not sad. It was from such a feeling that *Ikiru* arose.]

PART TWO OF "KUROSAWA ON KUROSAWA" WILL APPEAR IN THE OCTOBER SIGHT AND SOUND.



BLACK TAKES KING TWO

J. H. FENWICK

JOHN FRANKENHEIMER HAS TRACED an uneven and erratic path through his early films to the point he has now reached, and that point is itself an ambiguous one. His *Manchurian Candidate* was received with choruses of "brilliant", and *Seven Days in May* has had sufficient impact for Kingsley Amis to "go overboard" for it; but brilliant is a superficial adjective which seems to expect qualification, and Amis is neither primarily a film critic nor, in spite of his eminence, a really Serious Person. Frankenheimer's first four films were all much more obviously worthy, much more easily acceptable as meaningful, yet none of them was as good as these two political thrillers. What then were the

qualities of his first films, where did all the worthiness go, and exactly what are the achievements of his latest pictures?

The Young Stranger (1956) cannot be taken as in any way significant. Although it was based on Frankenheimer's own television show, *Deal a Blow*, it did not finally satisfy him. This, he stated later in an interview, was partly the result of technical caution from his director of photography, who seems to have represented the film camera as something rather less fluid than its television counterpart. Faced with such doubts, Frankenheimer apparently gave up some of his ambitions for the film and made it very simply—which had not been his original intention. To remark on the film's restraint, therefore, would be irrelevant. It was a critical success at the time; but would his ideal *Young Stranger* have been so? Given the later reception of *The Young Savages*, it seems doubtful.

A prolonged retirement into television work followed, until Harold Hecht and Burt Lancaster drew him back into the cinema. This time he lodged there. He made *The Young Savages* in 1960, *Bird Man of Alcatraz* and *All Fall Down* in 1961. From these it is already possible to isolate certain facts about Frankenheimer as a director. First there is his interest in close observation of a character, or, more particularly, close observation of a character in relation to environment—both being formed by it and reacting against it. The framework of *The Young Stranger* is evidence of this, just as his direction of James MacArthur is an early cinematic instance of his skill in handling actors. (He began as an actor himself.)

The environmental interest is clearer in *The Young Savages* and *Bird Man of Alcatraz*. The former traces differing points of view towards adolescent violence, looking at judge, police, mother, etc., and is tied together by the enquiries and changing attitudes of Burt Lancaster as the investigator who is seeking to place responsibility for the killing, by delinquents, of a blind Puerto Rican boy. The script itself is fairly stock, the characters not saying anything novel or breaking out of sociological cliché. Frankenheimer, however, while tending towards melodrama and shock techniques, adds considerably to the texture of the film by his careful observation of each character's surroundings. With a sometimes irritating mobility of camera, which tilts, zooms

and tracks giddily, he ties people's utterances to their trapings (the gang's dress, their haircuts, the streets they wander, the waste land which he pulls out from close-up to include), showing an acute eye for details, and a cool detachment in their selection, which sits oddly with his manner of presentation.

The Bird Man of Alcatraz is quieter, drawing a restrained but very effective performance from Burt Lancaster as Stroud, the life-prisoner who has changed in confinement from killer to bird-lover. Though the film is overlong, the rapport drawn between Stroud and his jailer, the pervading atmosphere of prison life, both show that the intimacy of observation in *The Young Stranger* was not altogether an accident. This tendency to absorption with the single figure has not been fully expressed since. (His ambition to film *Death*

ABOVE: LESLIE PARRISH AND LAURENCE HARVEY IN "THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE".

of a Man, for instance, Lael Tucker Wertenbaker's account of her husband's last months with cancer, has never been fulfilled.)

This continual awareness of character in environment is accompanied by a more general sociological interest, rendered more acute by long periods of work in television, where Frankenheimer began as an assistant to Sidney Lumet. The script of *The Young Savages*, from a novel by *Blackboard Jungle* author Evan Hunter, has an embarrassingly wide range of reference, which strains the already loosely woven central theme of the placing of responsibility for teenage violence. Frankenheimer shows an incisive clarity in dealing with these surrounding details. Marginal comment is glanced at in lucid visual images, though it is certainly true that the central observations (the outward shows of gang uniformity, for example) are more effective than are the fringe benefits of loosely related political preoccupations.

All Fall Down has a sociological foundation too. "An acidulous comment on American family life" was how the producer John Houseman regarded it. The script of this film has an odd pedigree. It began as a novel by James Leo Herlihy exploding the American prodigal son myth of the glamorous rebel (a mixture of social and literary criticism which, in spite of its intelligence, was earthbound through its uneasiness of aim and a tendency itself to suffer from the fault of romanticism). The scripting was unaccountably handed to William Inge. While Inge himself is not guilty of involvement in that particular myth, he is certainly one of the arch romanticists of small-town family exposé drama; and the choice seemed calculated to move the film into the areas which the novel criticised. Frankenheimer redressed the balance, and more. The weight of family life and the claustrophobia of small house living are caught in the conveying of domestic lay-out and necessities; the attraction and repulsion of family behaviour edgily revealed in the performances of Angela Lansbury, Karl Malden and Brandon de Wilde.

But the most striking way in which the balance is redressed is the virtuoso display of technique. All Frankenheimer's films after *The Young Stranger* show an intense technical ambition. In *The Young Savages* the style often looks superimposed. Undoubtedly clever, it fails to justify its self-consciousness (at least, not immediately) in dealing with naturalistic material. This discrepancy, in *All Fall Down*, no longer exists. The technical display is used to comment on the action and the attitudes, so that even a lushly romantic lakeside idyll, hazily soft focused, is given a satirical edge by its stylistic artificiality in the context. There is a hint of parody even when the style is working straightforwardly and, at its most carefully judged, a sort of "look at this" manner which adds to the cool humour of the observation.

* * *

It is the revelation of this humour and ironic detachment which prepares one for *The Manchurian Candidate*. Frankenheimer apparently abandons seriousness of intention in here embracing a new genre, the political-science fiction thriller. In fact what happens is that he uses this new framework, in both *The Manchurian Candidate* and *Seven Days in May*, to gain for himself more scope for comment—which is often expressed only through the technical subtleties of his treatment. The nightmare situations treated in these films use as springboards for their plots weaknesses and dangers which are worryingly real. The huge flaws in the democratic system, and the threats these dangers invite, lie at the heart of both films. In *The Manchurian Candidate*, Frankenheimer in addition brilliantly plays on the uneasy half-belief one extends to the theory of brain-washing, by slightly burlesquing all his most potent figures of threat. The Chinese scientists, their Russian colleagues, the Iselins themselves, are baroque figures of fun. In half laughing, one is easily led to allow the use of a premise which one only tentatively accepts. The logic of the development is so flawless that this half-belief is left festering in the mind.

In both films there is an utterly convincing clarity in observation of detail, anchoring down the wilder excesses of the plots; while a coldly satirical attitude to both the hunters and the hunted completely removes one from the realm of escapist melodrama. Yet the importance of the basic elements of escapist thriller cannot be denied. Fundamental to all is the fact that Frankenheimer, as one had heard of his television work, is a master craftsman as a storyteller. Details in his earlier films might have hinted at this (the courtroom scene in *The Young Savages*), but the faulty overall structures had disguised the fact. Yet the narrative skill in these last two films is the backbone of all else: he can make his points fast, sometimes almost too fast, and his speed and elegance, in combination with a complex plot, ensure that his other qualities can be given full expression and at the same time gain coherence. No time is taken off to explore marginalia; style says everything, and its messages have to be read as they flash by, or not read at all.

The Manchurian Candidate is a many-stranded film, but has one over-riding mood which stems from the brain-washing plot premise. The world of the film has become incomprehensible and out of control, not only on a mystic level but on an everyday human level too. This becomes clear even before the credits, with the capture of Captain Marco's (Frank Sinatra's) company. Immediately after they have been attacked there is a shot through the tail of the waiting helicopter, and this strange-shaped steel frame is quite bewildering until one is shown, from a different angle, what in fact it is.

This sense of the sinister, grotesque, huge, and mysterious is conveyed again and again. A long shot of Johnny Iselin's plane establishes how the Iselins and Shaw (Laurence Harvey) are travelling; but the machine also dwarfs its prospective occupants. The later upshots of Iselin in captain's cap, smug against the electric stars of the cabin ceiling, satirically underline his inadequacy. Subjectively angled shots of blown up photographs, the wildness of the scene at Madison Square Gardens emphasised by a wide-angled lens, the frightening mechanisation of Shaw as he climbs through the preparations in the Gardens (mechanisation achieved by the use of straight wipes and superimposition of micro-

ANGELA LANSBURY AND BRANDON DE WILDE, MOTHER AND SON IN "ALL FALL DOWN".





phone hum and noises of testing over the wipes as he climbs), all are justifiable as quick and sure ways of conveying necessary background, but all carry their own implicit comment.

The incomprehensibility of much of modern science, and its over-sophistication in comparison with everyday life, is stressed by the juxtaposing of anachronisms in setting. The alternations in the nightmare sequence between advanced Chinese lecture theatre and dated Southern hotel lobby give an extreme example of this, but the juxtaposing actually runs throughout the film and adds to the sense of Frankheimer's uneasiness concerning contemporary developments. This is especially apparent in the New York interiors. Shaw's house and office are dignified brownstone, but the dignity of the rooms is marred by the shots we are given of the jumble of contemporary embellishments—lamps, typewriters, dictaphones, all clashing with their background. The police station and the New York military H.Q. from which Marco operates are both Edwardian in style, but the notice boards, the mess of electrical wiring and low slung lights, make it look as though those who worked there had just camped down. This clash of dates is at its most carefully arranged in the sequence at the sanatorium where Shaw is laid up in bed. The room itself is cosy, old-fashioned, with strong diagonal lines of chimney breast and sloping ceiling; but this cosiness is utterly destroyed by the harsh verticals and horizontals of the tubular steel scaffolding round Shaw's bed.

This geometrical approach to the disruption of order is carried still further when Frankheimer is dealing more closely with the threatening chaos. Confusion is portrayed with extreme clarity and very precise compositions within the frame. The press conference which Iselin interrupts with his fantastic accusations of Communist infiltration is dominated by television cameras and monitor screens. The images shown on these screens of the surrounding events, however, are taken exclusively by those cameras furthest back in the arrangement of the scene. This results in one seeing only inverted images. When the conference begins, the real figures and their television shadows face inwards to each other as they talk, so that each speech is a sort of self-communion. When the senators hurl abuse at each other across the room, what is shown to us is the absurd sight of the real man and his televised opponent facing in the same direction, yelling into a void. When the frantic reactions of the press add to the disorder, we see a collision between the line of movement which a running reporter takes across the floor and the line traced by his television image in the foreground.

This is grotesque enough. The imagery Frankheimer uses to point his story, to show up the masks of demagoguery, and to trace ironic correspondences within the action, adds to the sense of detached and amused alarm. Many of these images are so striking that they have already been very widely remarked upon—the caviar American flag, the Abraham Lincoln portrait reflecting Iselin's face—but it has not been so widely observed how Frankheimer dictates the whole mood of a sequence by cutting into these images, which again are highly compressed pieces of narrative placing. His casting, as well as his imagery, helps to trace contrast and resemblance. It is surely no coincidence that the Negro psychiatrist who assists Marco bears such a strange facial resemblance to the Chinese expert responsible for the destruction of Shaw.

The irony of these interrelations, the wit of the images, seems to come from an underlying cynicism. What side is Frankheimer on? There seems to be no answer. Most of his satirical observation appears to be trained on the McCarthy-style Iselins, with their flag-waving patriotism leading the United States to destruction. Yet it is obvious that they are very much the creatures of their time and place. Military patriotism is apparently respectable in the film, but an early

THREE SCENES FROM "SEVEN DAYS IN MAY".

cut to a close-up of the American eagle on a drum, thumped vigorously and hollowly, prepares us for the Iselins a few minutes before they appear. Senator Jordan (the liberal and sympathetic politician) speaks a brand of rather self-consciously majestic prose when face to face with Mrs. Iselin which is scarcely distinguishable from hers. And, right at the core of the plot, what seems to be an attack on anti-Communist hysteria relies for its effect on the idea that Chinese Communists are capable of all. (To confuse this issue further, Frankenheimer has made the Pavlov research scientist, with his quirkily inhuman humour, a distinctly sympathetic figure.) So, later, in *Seven Days in May*, one begins to wonder exactly what the choice consists of; and the only preference left to one is the lesser of almost identical evils.

* * *

The grotesqueries and alarms of *Seven Days in May* are of a different sort. In a sense this last film begins where *The Manchurian Candidate* ended. The denouement of the latter was conveyed in a straightforward way, the pictures simply composed—very fittingly, since the mysteries had been abandoned finally for a straight contest of powers. In *Seven Days in May* the threat springs direct from such a struggle. The President of the United States, as the result of his negotiation of an idealistic disarmament treaty, has lost his popularity, and the military Joint Chiefs of Staff conspire to overthrow him and to take over government to prevent what they consider to be a disastrous step. The powers of the Pentagon are at war with the powers of the White House in a concealed, but none-the-less clear, battle for leadership. The whole idea of liberal democracy is endangered, partly by this external attack, partly because the process of political thinking has become so complex and at the same time fast-moving that the workings of popular election come to seem outdated, cumbersome, and even hypocritical. Can a modern government truly be said to represent its people? The ironies of the situation are brilliantly presented in the climax where the President (Fredric March) meets his enemy, General Scott (Burt Lancaster). The solution, a rather makeshift one, seems to be to pin one's faith on the small glimmering of humanity preserved through the creaking working of the Constitution.

The mysteriousness and unnaturalness of the threat are no longer at issue—the danger is a dwarfing one again, but this time it is a logical danger, the threat of the military machine. The whole film becomes machine-like as a result. The main element is depersonalisation—people become pieces of the machine's progress. The script serves this end very well. The original novel, even more badly written than most big American best-sellers, was a great deal more unusual in its background details than is the film—especially in its treatment of the blackmail sub-plot. (The hold on General Scott, for example, came from his ex-mistress's tax returns, not from his letters to her.) Rod Serling has not only compressed a great deal, he has also conventionalised considerably, so that no kooky details distract from the central struggle. Marginal moral issues, which abound in the novel, are also rigidly excluded, with the same effect. Jerry Goldsmith's score in addition underlines the dehumanisation with its harsh, mechanical quality.

The methods Frankenheimer adopts to obtain his results are again various, related to those of *The Manchurian Candidate* in their elegance and the economy of the elements used. There is the seemingly casual way in which he introduces his

major figures as part of a larger unfolding pattern: the President and General Scott are first presented to us as conflicting images of power rather than as people. First we see the White House, picketed; next General Scott's photograph is shown on a picketer's banner. Before seeing the President in person we are shown the newspaper reports on his national standing, which are being marked for his inspection, then at last the President himself is glanced at in long shot. The first sight of General Scott is a top shot of a senatorial committee in session, which then cuts to a close-up of the back of his neck as he faces the investigating committee. The first full-face picture is a long shot from the questioning senator's viewpoint. This manner of treating his characters, though less deliberately set up in other cases, applies also to more minor members of the combat.

Settings again swamp the actors, but this time they seem at home in their background, even if swamped, at one with the maps, the pictures of rockets, the sliding doors. Each figure is carefully placed—order could go no further. Where in *The Manchurian Candidate* Frankenheimer cut in to a bizarre placing image, here he cuts to exceptionally clear statements of locale. One finds a ground plan of the Pentagon in the foreground, or a notice board, or an immediately recognisable arrangement of objects. The smooth efficiency of the result makes the development as clear as the naming of parts in weapon training. Moreover, escalators slide characters into frame, flashing spotlights in close-up guide them, their arrivals and departures are plotted by closed circuit television cameras.

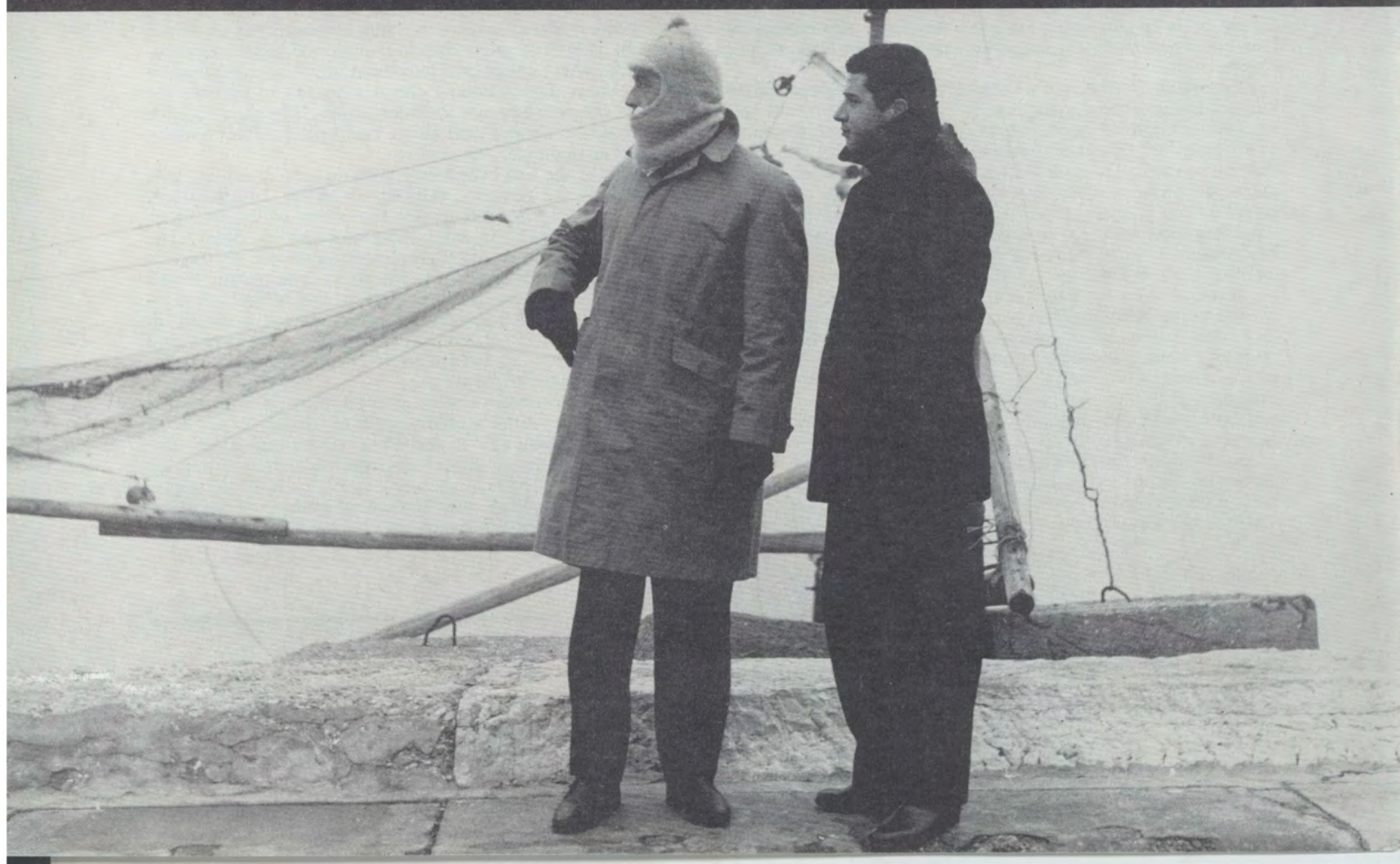
These details all alienate. One is forced to watch only: involvement in such a carefully laid out network would be impossible. Even more alienating is the use to which Frankenheimer this time puts his many television screens. Whether used for internal communication or for public statement, the effect is to draw attention away from the character and on to the stark facts being conveyed. It is difficult to regard the image of an image on the screen as in any way a person, and the director exploits this fact, this draining of immediacy. The process of dehumanising in this way is revealed at work in the brilliant Blue Lake shots. This sequence begins with a long shot of Scott's spies, cuts to include the hidden cameraman filming them, telephotos into them from the cameraman's point of view, then suddenly changes quality to become the projected image which the President stops. The shock of this change conveys a great deal about Frankenheimer's handling of grades of reality on the screen.

Above all, the overwhelming stylistic device which aids these ends is the fanatical tidiness of all the compositions. The television screens either take the centre of the frame or symmetrically flank it; everything marches in order. The blown up pictures are photographed straight on, so there is no confusion, no irrelevant reaction to the photograph for its own sake; doorways enclose perfectly balanced arrangements of tables, globes, etc. Regimentation is certainly in almost absolute control, even of the "good" characters, and the visual proof which we are offered explains the shock that Frankenheimer contrives to give.

Whether he can continue to express himself with such a striking economy outside of the political thriller it is difficult to tell; in these films raw material and style are so much one. But it seems unlikely that a director with such command should falter just through changing subjects. And the worry, anyway, is a needless one, since the genre is everywhere being found increasingly fruitful.



MICHELE MANCEAUX / **IN THE RED DESERT**



SOME FILM-MAKERS DECIDE to tell a story and then choose the decor which suits it best. With me it works the other way around: there's some landscape, some place where I want to shoot, and out of that develops the theme of my films." The words are Michelangelo Antonioni's; and at the time I interviewed him last winter he had been two months at Ravenna shooting his ninth feature film, his first in colour.

Ravenna immediately suggests mosaics. For Antonioni, this is a tourist's reflex. If the alabaster windows of Galla Placida diffuse the softest light in the world, and if the blue mosaics are like a plunge into the depths of the sea, all this means little to him, all this belongs to the past. He chose Ravenna for its smoky factories, its oil derricks, its steel pylons. After the war, the pinewoods stretched down to the sea and the town had thirty thousand inhabitants. Today the silos and oil refineries have killed off the trees. Oil has been found here, artificial islands have been built; and there are a hundred and forty thousand inhabitants.

This short course in economic geography is virtually the theme of *Il Deserto Rosso*. "A new class is coming into existence in this extraordinary landscape, and my characters belong to this working-class bourgeoisie. The people in *The Eclipse* were free: they fitted into no precise social category, they had no special obligations. But this time I am dealing with people whose place in society is much more defined: an electronics engineer, his wife and child, and a friend who is also an engineer." (The wife is Monica Vitti, the husband a Milanese lawyer turned actor for the occasion, Carlo Chionetti, the other man Richard Harris.)

They had been filming in bitterly cold weather, partly in a rented house down by the docks, and that night, out on the quay, the temperature was down to eleven below zero. It took hours to light the canal, the boats, the distant pylons. The technicians groaned as they stamped about on the icy ground; but they were grumblers in a Napoleonic campaign. They know that with Antonioni any film becomes an epic. They kept at it until five in the morning. The script demands a damp, heavy, charged atmosphere. Certainly this was achieved: the great red flames flaring from the chimneys warmed only the stars.

Next day, I talked with Antonioni. "I don't say that there ought to be a return to nature, that industrialisation is wrong. I even find something very beautiful in this mastery of man over matter. To me, these pipes and girders seem just as moving as the trees. Of course it's horrifying to think that birds which fly through these fumes are going to fall dead, that the gas makes it impossible to grow anything for miles around. But every age, after all, has called for its sacrifices, and it's out of these that something else has grown."

"What part," I ask, "does Monica Vitti play in this new film?"—"She's a neurotic woman who has lost touch with reality."

"You said that your characters this time were ordinary people, but if this woman is almost insane, surely we are no longer in an ordinary situation?"—"Yes, because it is very possible that this young woman really has been injured by the conditions of her life. It isn't made explicit, but one knows that she was normal enough until a little while ago."

"And the two engineers?"—"The husband has adapted himself, he doesn't want to be bothered, and he finds his wife's illness rather a joke. He thinks she is a fantasist, a character: she amuses him. The other engineer has dreams of escape, and he wants to get some of the men to sign up with him and go off to start a factory in Patagonia. The film begins with a strike, when he's trying to convince the men. He doesn't see why it should always have to be like this, a kind of military camp in which men are parked for life."

"Isn't the film a description of a crisis in the couple's relationship?"—"It's rather more than that. When I saw this landscape, I really wanted to know just how the people who inhabit it manage their lives. Obviously it must have done

something to their emotions, their moral attitudes, their whole psychology. Because these people, after all, are really human beings in their most 'modern' state. They are living the kind of life that we may all come to, if we don't do something about it."

"How do you explain the title—the red desert?"—"It isn't meant to be symbolic. Titles of this sort have a kind of umbilical cord linking them to the work. I don't really know why. It's more of an open title, and anyone can read into it whatever he likes . . . the blood-stained desert, I suppose, littered with the bones of men."

"Red also for the colour . . . Why are you making this film in colour?"—"It has been conceived specially for shooting in colour, and I would never have made it in black and white. It seems ridiculous to me that anyone could imagine a film might be shot in colour or in black and white. Colour is not just a little something extra. Personally, I love colour. I dream in colour, and I've always wanted to shoot in colour, but in that case I would have made different films."

"This time, I am really facing the problem of colour. I wanted to use it to help me convey states of mind, and it is realistic colour—at least to the extent that it communicates this kind of reality. No two people see things in quite the same way; and what you see is going to depend on your mental condition. For instance, this neurotic woman acquires a shop without having any real idea of what she is going to sell in it. Each day she passes along a street on the way to her shop, which she is preparing in an entirely haphazard way. She keeps repainting it, and we see these pots of paint because it is on the painting that her whole attention is focused. But the street she walks along is entirely grey, right down to a little chestnut stall. She is walking there as though in a fog."

"You are often criticised as an intellectual director . . ."—"I don't take that as a criticism but a compliment. But, unhappily, I don't really think I am very much of an intellectual, since I am incapable of taking in a great number of things. For instance, I feel that values are changing, that moral standards are in danger. But at the same time I love the rockets, the new landscapes. I see this, I show it in my films, but I don't find any solution: I make careful, tidy films—craftsmanlike films, you might say."

"This is the fourth film you have made with Monica Vitti. Is it that she inspires you, or do you write parts expressly for her?"—"I have always loved feminine characters, and before *L'Avventura* there had been several parts in my films that Monica might have played. She certainly inspires me, because I like to watch and to direct her, but the parts I give her are a long way away from her own character. Monica, *c'est la joie de vivre*. When I told her the theme of *The Eclipse* her reaction was 'It's all very well, but I don't know any woman like that and I wouldn't know how to go about playing her.'"

"Does she influence you?"—"I don't think so, but does one ever know? Generally I only tell Monica about a film when I am certain of making it one day. What she says then doesn't influence me, but what she has said from day to day, while I was writing it, may very well find its way into the film without either of us being aware of it. In any case, these questions of influences aren't really very important. All artists owe something to somebody. This 'somebody' is an element in the work, but it's only the work itself that finally counts."

While we talked, Antonioni had kept jumping up to shut or open the door of the caravan where we were sitting. It was always too hot or too cold. When, finally, he left to shoot a very long take, I felt that his tired, tense actors would be in that mood of agony and exasperation which is precisely that of the film itself. Where is smiling, sunny Italy? Ravenna, they say, has calm and serene mosaics . . .

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FESTIVALS

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cannes

CANNES, 1964. THE SEA stretches blue to the horizon, punctuated by the minatory dot of an American submarine anchored in the middle distance. At a cinema in the town they are showing *Dr. Folamour*. Elsewhere, in case the atmosphere of high culture should become oppressive, the salesmen of the Film Market are optimistically flogging movies with titles like *Her Bikini Never Got Wet* or *London in the Row* (not, disappointingly, some Edwardian evocation, but a typical festival misprint for *London in the Raw*). Somewhere or other, Jayne Mansfield is making a personal appearance. The Brazilians, worried about their reputation for kindness to animals after a scene of dog-suffering in one of their films, have flown the dog over to conduct his own press conference. Along the Croisette stroll two festival jurors, Fritz Lang and Charles Boyer, veterans of a Hollywood that will never come again—and making what, one wonders, of all the elaborate international strivings after what that Hollywood once achieved so effortlessly.

A reassuring thing about film festivals is that they are always the same. And yet, perhaps, not quite. It is only five years (or, should one say, it is already five years?) since New Wave year at Cannes; and this time, of all the main festival entries, there was only one by a director whom everyone would agree in placing fairly and squarely in the international first division—François Truffaut. “The film of an old young man,” someone churlishly called *La Peau Douce*. Certainly, and for the first time, this is a Truffaut film without the special awareness of youth, the unchecked lyricism and the constant visual excitements. *La Peau Douce* tells a conventional enough anecdote, the eternal triangle at its most eternal, about a middle-aged literary man, with wife and child, uneasily involved in a brief affair with an air hostess. Within its self-imposed limits, the film is beautifully judged, beautifully acted by Jean Desailly, and full of felicitous things, such as the long and extremely funny sequence when the writer is trying to dodge a provincial literary gathering in order to spend an evening with the girl. Repeatedly, Truffaut takes the conventional incident and shoots it just enough against the grain to steer it away from cliché; and he has devised one of those endings which critics are asked not to give away, and which, if not psychologically very acute, at least works masterfully on its own tragi-comic terms. Why, then, the slight sense of disappointment? Perhaps this is just the penalty innovators must expect to pay when they cease obviously to innovate.

Charm, tact, sensibility: this new French cinema seems to be coming perilously close to the traditional virtues of old French cinema. Jacques Demy's *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, winner of the Grand Prix, has all these qualities, along with some of the most carefully elegant colour design ever put on the screen. Its story is an appealing little operetta, set to Michel Legrand's music and all-singing dialogue, about the girl from the umbrella shop in Cherbourg (Catherine Deneuve, enchantingly framed among her multi-coloured wares) who falls in love with a garage hand, loses him to military service, and marries someone else for security. Even the petrol pumps of an Esso station are sparkingly assimilated into the decor of a film that turns everything to prettiness. Yet within this elegant French bandbox of a movie, there are moments when the lustier ghost of an American musical seems to be struggling to get out: moments when one would give a lot to see Judy Garland striding down the street, or Gene Kelly dancing in the Cherbourg rain.

For the wilder excitements which a festival ought to provide, the sense not of the exquisite Fabergé toy but the blazing diamond itself, one had to look to Hiroshi Teshigahara's bizarre *Woman of the Dunes*. At the beginning of this film a young teacher, spending his holiday collecting insect specimens in a waste of sand, asks for a lodging for the night. The villagers lower him to the bottom of a sandpit, where a woman lives all alone, shovelling sand at night from her doorstep, and rewarded for this service by rations of food and water lowered



"PRIMA DELLA RIVOLUZIONE": ADRIANA ASTI.

from above. Seven years later, the man (Eiji Okada, from *Hiroshima*) is still there. . . . The distributors don't exactly predispose one to love their picture by advertising it as "the most provocative motion picture ever made—but censorproof in most countries." And I don't feel that *Woman of the Dunes*, with the all-purpose symbolism of its shifting sands, can stand up to too much investigation in terms of meaning. What counts is less what is being done than how: not the larger gestures towards 'significance' but the obsessive day-to-day detail—the umbrella always hanging open in the house to catch the falling sand, the edged and oblique dialogues, and, above all, the extraordinary way Teshigahara deploys the textures of sand and skin, so that for long sequences (not only the erotic ones) we are given the sense of a strange little hidden world, in which people and environment merge. The second half of the film is more open, and includes one sequence, when masked villagers come to caper around the rim of the sandpit, which breaks the mood by its insistence on how odd and outlandish the whole thing is. The firmer the brake Teshigahara keeps on any instincts towards exoticism, the more compelling his film becomes; and he has shot it in a way that makes sand, that boring surface, look as photogenic as snow.

The other Japanese entry, Kon Ichikawa's *Alone on the Pacific*, was no less unexpected, and no less precise in its observation. Ichikawa has filmed the true story of a young Japanese who sailed a 19-foot yacht from Osaka to San Francisco, in ninety days of solitary adventure. One expects, and gets, typhoons and beautiful Eastman Colour sunsets. What one did not expect was so much quiet humour. At the height of the storm this young sailor takes to tears—first a dignified snivel, then a full-throated wail; his advance preparations include a long and preposterous shopping list, with five straw hats in case four blow away; gallantly, he cooks terrible concoctions and persuades himself that he really likes the taste; and when an aircraft hovers overhead, face-saving instincts ensure that his first concern is terror lest the pilot should think he wants rescuing. At the end, after the triumphant shooting of the Golden Gate Bridge, the audience gave the star, Yujiro Ishihara, an immense cheer; as much a tribute to Ichikawa, who had achieved such a sense of involvement that many people were no longer quite sure they hadn't been watching the hero of the real adventure.

The Japanese and French entries all conveyed the reassuring sense of knowing precisely what they were about. So, I suppose, did Pietro Germi's *Sedotta e Abbandonata* (*Seduced and Abandoned*), the objective here being, presumably, to achieve an equally successful follow-up to *Divorce—Italian Style*. Much of the first half of this comedy of Sicilian manners is genuinely funny, and there is an appealing portrait of a pudgy girl, devoted equally to sleep and chocolates, who rises gamely to every occasion in the mistaken belief that she is really the centre of all the fuss and drama. Before the end, however, noise, vulgarity, and a cruelty in the jibes barely excused, and certainly not justified, by the façade of serious satirical purpose, have taken command. It was a relief to turn from this, and from the tame little anti-clerical squibs of *La Nina de Luto*, a Spanish comedy about a girl who never gets to see her fiancé because she lives in perpetual mourning, to the Russian *Je m'balade dans Moscou* (roughly, *I Wander Round Moscow*). This is a thoroughly inconsequential film from a newish director, Gheorghi Danelia, distinctly reassuring to the West in its optimistic emphasis on a consumer goods society. Two boys potter around the city, the mood is genuinely relaxed and easy, and for the first time that I can remember in a Russian film we are given a thoroughly Western shot of traffic by night, the car headlights going prettily in and out of focus as they stream along a highway.

Solemnity, which this year's festival was nominally making efforts to overcome, really came into its own with Bernard Wicki's *The Visit*. This is a genuine international heavyweight.



"ALONE ON THE PACIFIC".

with the proper literary credentials (a Dürrenmatt play, set at the symbolic end of Ruritania), big star performances from Ingrid Bergman and Anthony Quinn, and a multi-national cast, mostly heavily dubbed. Fox, who got *The Condemned of Altona*, have also acquired this one; and it is precisely the sort of film, set in a kind of intellectual no man's land and top-heavy with self-importance, that the big American companies seem to find served up to them when they go in search of that illusory phantom, the European culture film.

Such films are popularly supposed—depressing thought—to be 'critics' pictures'. But what most critics are looking for, and at Cannes found none too frequently, are the flashes of illumination which reveal the director as a true film man, someone who could be doing nothing but this. The Truffaut picture, for instance, came after several dullish days, and the reaction was immediate: this might not be the best of Truffaut, but here was a *film*, not a tract or a novel, or a mile of celluloid signposted by some good acting. For the tract, we had the American *One Potato, Two Potato*, a study by a new director, Larry Peerce, of a marriage between black and white. Intentions irreproachable; execution such as almost to persuade one that the American negroes have a point in regarding the liberals as the secret weapon of the opposition. The novel, perhaps, was Jack Clayton's *The Pumpkin Eater*, a film made with consummate care and devotion, but somehow suffocating under the very weight of concern lavished upon it.

"LA PEAU DOUCE": JEAN DESAILLY AND FRANCOISE DORLEAC.





"PARALLELSTRASSE": JAPANESE MONKS AT PRAYER.

Film-making, the real thing, is a damnably difficult business, and there is nothing like a festival for making one aware of it.

One, finally, from the Critics' Week, which Richard Roud discusses here in more detail. Ferdinand Khittl's *Parallelstrasse*, winner of the Grand Prix at last winter's experimental jamboree at Knokke, is almost impossible to describe without making it sound tiresomely gnostic and absurd. Five men, under the eye of a disenchanted invigilator, struggle to make sense of assorted film documents, clues to an insoluble mystery. We watch a kind of disconnected travelogue—ruined cities, Japanese temple monks, a hauntingly strange shot of three Brazilian riders advancing towards the camera while the commentary speculates on the whereabouts of a fourth rider, a hypnotic image of a long, long causeway on Key West, a back to front slaughterhouse sequence which ends with the animals reassembled. The five men, filmed in black and white and picked out by harsh spotlights, shuffle their papers, argue, reminisce. A mixture of intellectual conundrum and hypnotically telling imagery, the film is rather like a ride on a conveyor belt, always coming round again to its starting point. For all its intimations of pretension, I found it entirely compelling.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

THIS WAS THE THIRD French Critics' Week at Cannes, and let it be said right away, surely the most successful. Actually, a French week lasts eight days, and is really more School of Paris than French, since several of the fourteen selectors are foreigners based in Paris. Most of the films were at least as good as those in competition and several were better. Penelope Houston has already written about *Parallelstrasse*, the greatest Ximenes film of all time; and *Point of Order*, a montage film based on the McCarthy hearings, will probably be coming out here soon, so I shall concentrate here on the three films I like best—*Prima della Rivoluzione*, *La Vie à l'Envers* and *La Herencia*, from, respectively, Italy, France and the Argentine.

Before getting started, I would like to single out a forty-minute film which was, exceptionally, also shown: *Joseph Killian*. Made by two young Czechs, Juracek and Schmidt, this—while not an adaptation—is the best Kafka film made to date. To be sure, the authors have declared it to be a criticism of the survivals of the personality cult, but this tale of a man who one day rents a cat from a state cat shop, and when he wants to return the animal finds that the shop is no longer there, and perhaps never was there, has disquieting overtones which go beyond any satire of bureaucracy. This short feature was all that Welles's *The Trial* should have been and wasn't.

Bernardo Bertolucci is known here as the director of *La Commare Secca*. Although a brilliant job of direction, this was not exactly a personal film, the scenario being a hand-me-down from Pasolini dropped in Bertolucci's lap. His second feature,

Prima della Rivoluzione (*Before the Revolution*) is both personal and autobiographical. Its title comes from Talleyrand's famous remark: "Only those who lived before the Revolution knew how sweet life could be." The Talleyrand of the film is an 18-year-old scion of the upper middle class of Parma, but for Fabrizio (a delicate bow in the direction of Stendhal) the Revolution never comes. Fabrizio thinks of himself as an outsider, a rebel: he dallies with Communism, and even has an affair with his neurotically beautiful young aunt. But he is not the stuff revolutionaries are made of, and he is as incapable of handling his relationship with Gina as he is of any political action. Finally, he capitulates entirely: he decides to marry the nice young girl he has always been destined to marry. His sentimental education is over.

This is a very dense film, particularly the first half before the various themes finally begin to mesh à la Faulkner. Bertolucci has made a kind of opera—he loves to fuse images and music: the great scene between Gina and Fabrizio is set against a pop song, and Fabrizio's final capitulation is seen against the opening of the Parma Opera season. Unrealistically but expressively, both the triumph of the bourgeoisie and Fabrizio's betrayal of his ideals is rendered by the performance of Verdi's *Macbeth*. Other less grandiose scenes, like the declaration of love in a disused typesetter's shop, and the satirical and yet poignant treatment of the annual Communist picnic with Fabrizio melodramatically reciting phrases from Karl Marx, show that Bertolucci is capable of sharpness of vision as well as of the powerful bravura scene. The hero is well—if necessarily negatively—acted by Francesco Barilli, but Adriana Asti as the aunt is nothing short of stupendous. Clearly the most important film by a young director shown at Cannes, it was a natural for the Young Critics' Prize; and, I am happy to report, it got it.

Alain Jessua's *La Vie à l'Envers* won a prize before the festival—the Prix Marilyn—given by a jury of distinguished French women novelists, critics and journalists. This is the first film about alienation seen from the point of view of the alienated. Or rather, that asks *who* is alienated and from *what*. Our hero is a nice ordinary young Frenchman, a bit detached, but otherwise the model employee and satisfactory lover, who one fine day begins to find his own company infinitely more interesting than that of anyone else. Furthermore, he begins to discover such beauty and fascination in the cracks in the wall of his bedroom that eventually he wonders if it is really worth the trouble of going out at all.

Alienation or Zen? In any case the film is extremely funny (yes!), and Jessua has directed with wit and precision. It all stands or falls on the hero, and Charles Denner (who plays Landru in the Chabrol film) is superbly convinced and convincing. This is Jessua's first film, and he not only directed but also wrote script and dialogue. Although *La Vie à l'Envers* (*Life Inside Out*) was actually chosen by the Festival pre-selection committee to represent France officially, it seems to have been pushed aside for the more commercial *Cent Mille Dollars au Soleil*.

La Herencia almost didn't get to Cannes at all. Banned for over a year, it appears to have got out thanks to the recent coup d'état. Why ban an adaptation of the famous Maupassant story about a childless couple who are willed a lot of money on condition that they provide an heir within three years? Because the sterile husband respectably pushes his respectable wife into the arms of another man? No, rather because this ambitious opportunism is both seen against a ferocious satire of Argentine life and is at the same time an image of it. Director Ricardo Alventosa, whose first feature this is, succeeds in translating his grim satirical sense into brilliant sight gags—like the attempts to make the old lady smile in her coffin.

I would love to finish on Godard's new film *Bande à Part*, which was screened privately at Cannes. But it's going to Venice and I mustn't poach. It's a honey, though.

RICHARD ROUD

IN THE PICTURE

The Muriel File

QUIS CUSTODIET IPSOS CUSTODES; or, who referees a disagreement among critics? Scarcely had the dust settled after the reviews of *Il Mare* ("as near to being a masterpiece as anything we are likely to see this year"—*The Times*; "I would dearly love to know what Mr. Patroni Griffi conceived himself as being so sophisticated and reticent about"—*New Statesman*) when *Muriel* came along to split the reviewers even more thoroughly. Among national press critics, *The Guardian*, *Financial Times* and *Observer* were out-and-out enthusiastic, with Mrs. Gilliatt celebrating her conversion to Resnais with some splendidly ringing phrases. The film, she wrote, has "the authentic, triumphant ring of a man far out ahead, in country where no one has been before; you can hear the trees falling as he clears the path." But for some the trees seem to have fallen altogether too loudly. John Coleman, in the *New Statesman*, found it apposite to draw comparisons with "some Gallic equivalent of *Compact*." Alexander Walker, in the *Evening Standard*, commended the film only to "morbid filmgoers who wish to see a talent seemingly in the last stages of decomposition." And Philip Oakes ended his *Sunday Telegraph* review with the curt injunction: "Someone once wrote that time must have a stop. So must this kind of movie-making."

The extremists seemed to have made up their minds that Resnais was out to bamboozle them with his "private chic," his "images which tease," and that British common-sense should remain proof against such deceptions. The moderates were civil, but uncertain. *The Times* found the published script altogether clearer than the actual film and complained of "wilful mystification," though allowing that "where reseeing M. Resnais' other films tends to diminish them, with *Muriel* it only increases the film's stature." Even Dilys Powell, in the course of a generally respectful review in the *Sunday Times*, admitted to considerable perplexity: "One needs to be up betimes to keep pace with its errant movements. As a matter of fact, the first time I saw it I was bemused to such an extent that I almost failed to notice, towards the end, a corpse lying in the Eastman colour doorway."

Bemused or not, audiences at the Cameo Poly kept the film running for a respectable six weeks, as against a fortnight's run, in the teeth of an even more bad-tempered press, at the Plaza Theatre in New York. In Paris, during a ten-week run shared between three cinemas, the film was seen by a total of 90,747 people.

Meanwhile, Resnais himself has recently been in London, searching out locations for *The Adventures of Harry Dickson*, whose detective hero is likely to be played by an Englishman. He had several places in mind, but whenever he revisited them it was to find that buildings had been pulled down since his last trip. A situation out of *Muriel*; or just another case of life struggling to keep pace with art.

Chanbara

PETER CLAYBURN writes: Of the five hundred or so films produced in an average year in Japan, a third fall into the category colloquially known as *chanbara*, a word which originates from the narrated commentary to silent films, defies translation, but generally connotes samurai in armour, swordplay, heroics, histrionics and dirty work at the crossroads. An Eastern Western, in fact. Yet to say "a third" only tells part of the story. With an average completion time of under fifty days and an initial circulation of from

fifty to a hundred prints, these period films fill much more than a third of the playing time in Japan's eight thousand cinemas.

Within the general *chanbara* is a sub-class of films which have become increasingly popular in the last decade. These deal with the near supernatural exploits of the *ninja*. The word means roughly "a person who endures"; and endure they did, and do. During the feudal era a highly efficient spy system ensured that the military dictatorship in the capital kept in touch with all currents of opinion, constructive and subversive, within the realms of the two hundred odd baronies. Popular fancy gradually attributed miraculous powers to these agents, who, for their part, were nothing loth to encourage this trend. An understandable absence of factual accounts of the *ninjas'* exploits has left the field wide open to the fervid imaginings of modern Japan's one hundred and thirty full-time scriptwriters. The result is a collection of exploits which treat the *ninja* as an amalgam of Robin Hood, King Arthur and Sherlock Holmes, with touches of Houdini and Superman thrown in. Most of these productions are unashamedly pot-boilers. The scarcity of original material, and the Japanese system of having stars appear in as many as ten films yearly, and supporting actors in as many as thirty, can lead to little else.

Dressed entirely in black—a stage convention denoting invisibility—the *ninja* is, perversely, easily spotted. If more were needed the lesson is driven home by the sight of flame emerging from his fingertips and engulfing his adversaries in miniature mushroom clouds. When in particularly dire straits, the hard-pressed *ninja* may call in the services of a passing typhoon, but this is exceptional.

Why the enormous popularity of *chanbara* in Japan? The favourite answer from the Japanese is that they afford an avenue of escapism from the mental and emotional stresses which result from superimposing a twentieth-century industrial economy on to a medieval social pattern. *Chanbara* offers an opportunity to revert, for ninety minutes, to a period when social custom and social pattern fitted. The audience identifies itself with the sword-wielding samurai, punishing the offenders in a way no longer possible in the real world outside. The theme of *chanbara* films—the interplay of duty, obligation and revenge between lord and vassal—is uncomplicated by modern business, political and administrative hierarchies. The Japanese finds no difficulty in mentally reverting to this period. His language, spoken and written, is unchanged. At home he and his wife, except for hair styles, dress the same. They eat the same food, use the same utensils, sit in the same way on the same matting floors, and very often read the same books and enjoy the same music. Modern ferro-concrete apartments are as often as not fitted out inside in traditional style, with superfluous sliding wood and paper doors camouflaging metal french windows. *Chanbara* entertainment forms the mental corollary for a society which has yet to catch up with itself.



JAPANESE SCHOOLBOY AND CINEMA POSTERS.

Warsaw Notes

BOLESŁAW MICHAŁEK writes: The weakness of Polish cinema during the last year or so, it's often suggested, has been due to the fact that the best directors have been absent from the studios. Not the full explanation, perhaps, but at least a partial one. Andrzej Munk died in 1961, and his unfinished film, *Passenger*, shows how great was the loss. Wajda made his last Polish film, *Innocent Sorcerers*, in 1961, and has since shot *A Siberian Lady Macbeth* in Yugoslavia, and an episode for the French *L'Amour à Vingt Ans*. He seems to have had several projects in mind, but none of them has materialised. Jerzy Kawalerowicz has made nothing since *Mother Joan of the Angels* (1961), but has been involved in negotiations to set up a co-production, *Pharaoh*. A small cinema, like Poland's, can't afford such absences.

This summer, however, there are developments to report. Wajda and Kawalerowicz are filming again, as is the indefatigable Wojciech Has. And all three of them have embarked on big historical subjects, a genre previously almost unknown in the Polish cinema, with the exception of Ford's *Knights of the Teutonic Order*. Is this just a coincidence, or does it mark some new trend? It has been much discussed in Warsaw, since other historical films are also in the offing, from Jan Rybowski and again from Ford.

Polish cinema has been noted for its artistic and human rather than its spectacular qualities; but I don't think that we are in for a major change. The "big productions" are not going to be that big. The budgets are certainly larger—double or even treble that of the average Polish film. But they are still ten times smaller than those of spectacle films made in the West. The technical possibilities, moreover, simply wouldn't permit the really outsize spectacular. "We are condemned to penetrate in depth," one of our directors said to me the other day, "to be always very serious, since we can't throw ourselves into the big spectacles . . ." Just as well, perhaps.

Nor are the subjects of the films merely the thin stuff of conventional spectacle. *Pharaoh*, the Kawalerowicz project, is a novel by Bolesław Prus, a brilliant Polish writer of the late nineteenth century almost unknown in the West. It creates an Egypt more imaginary than historic, through which the writer tried to uncover certain main lines of moral evolution, certain political mechanisms. Kawalerowicz, who has written the script with Tadeusz Konwicki, will certainly take the film in the same direction: he wants less to make an historical costume piece than a series of reflections on the relation between the state and the individual, between the social and moral elements in human nature.

Wajda's new film will be *Ashes*, an adaptation of a novel by Stefan Żeromski, a writer who died in 1925 and whose work was in the great romantic tradition of Polish nineteenth century literature. *Ashes* is violent, lyrical, grandiloquent, and at the same time

penetrating, catching the feeling of a turbulent period in Polish history—the Napoleonic era, that time of great national hopes and great defeats. The subject seems made for Wajda: vain heroism, the cruel dilemma of a Polish soldier of Napoleon, committed to the cause of liberty, who finds himself in Spain working to suppress that same cause. The novel—and no doubt Wajda's film—has its big battle scenes, its pursuits and galloping horsemen. But it seems clear enough that these are not the things which have drawn Wajda to it: the novel contains in itself so many of the themes which echoed through Wajda's own trilogy.

Finally, there is Has's new film, a distinctly adventurous undertaking. He is filming *The Manuscript Found at Saragossa*, a novel by Jan Potocki which is at once a literary and an historical curiosity. Written in French by a Polish aristocrat of the eighteenth century, this is a sort of literary divertissement, comparable perhaps with the works of Swift or Voltaire, but having a tone, character and intelligence entirely its own. Given Has's sensibility, and his feeling for the unexpected, I can't believe that the result is going to be just another historical spectacular.

Change of Direction

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE has acquired during the past few months both a new Director and a new Chairman of the Board of Governors. The new Director, Mr. Stanley Reed, takes over on July 1st from Mr. James Quinn, who has been director since 1955 and whose immediate intention is to engage more directly in film work. Mr. Reed, who joined the Institute in 1950 as Education Officer, has been Secretary of the B.F.I. and head of the National Film Theatre.

Sir William Coldstream earlier this year succeeded Mr. Sylvester Gates as Chairman of the Governors. Sir William is both painter and (as Slade Professor of Fine Arts) administrator. His connections with the cinema go back to the G.P.O. Unit days, when he worked as an editor on *Coal Face*, and was one of that little group of extraordinary talents who found their temporary home in British documentary.

Work in Progress

Argentina

LEOPOLDO TORRE NILSSON: *The Eavesdropper*, his first English-speaking film, to be shot in and around Buenos Aires with Stathis (Anatolian Smile) Giallelis and Janet Margolin. A Frank Perry production, for release through Columbia.

Great Britain

DESMOND DAVIS: *The Uncle*, from a novel by Margaret Abrams, about the secret behaviour of children when they are alone. Location shooting near Plymouth, with Rupert Davies and Brenda Bruce. A Play-Pix production for British Lion.

JOSEPH LOSEY: *Hamp*, adapted from a TV play about the fate of a deserter at Passchendaele in World War I, with Dirk Bogarde, Tom Courtenay, Leo McKern and Barry Foster. A B.H.E. Programmes production for release through Warner-Pathé.

U.S.A.

ROBERT ALDRICH: *Hush . . . Hush, Sweet Charlotte*, a follow-up to *Baby Jane*, starring Bette Davis, Joan Crawford, Joseph Cotten, Agnes Moorehead, and "re-discovering" Mary Astor, as a widow who plays a key role in revealing the truth about the murder of her husband 37 years earlier. An Associates/Aldrich Production.

ARTHUR PENN: *Mickey One*, a suspense comedy, starring Warren Beatty, Alexandra Stewart, Hurd Hatfield, Franchot Tone and one Donna Michelle, voted "Playmate of the Year" by *Playboy* magazine. A Florin-Tatira Production for Columbia.

TONY RICHARDSON: *The Loved One* from (at long last) Evelyn Waugh's novel about embalming and other American funeral habits. With Robert Morse, Anjanette Comer, Jonathan Winters and John Gielgud. A Filmways production for M-G-M.

WILLIAM WYLER: *The Collector*, from a novel by John Fowles about a young man who kidnaps a girl and incarcerates her in a twisted effort to prove his love. With Terence Stamp, Samantha Eggar, Kenneth More. Blazer Films for Columbia.

France

JEAN-LUC GODARD: *Le Démon de onze heures*, from a "série noire" novel by Lionel White about a man who falls in love with a very young girl. With Jean-Paul Belmondo. Rome-Paris Film.

AUDREY HEPBURN PACKS A PISTOL IN "PARIS WHEN IT SIZZLES", RICHARD QUINE'S COMEDY BASED ON DUVIVIER'S "LA FÊTE A HENRIETTE".





FUGITIVE FROM MURDER

PETER JOHN DYER

"I AM THE LAST of the actors of my era," Peter Lorre complained a few days before his death in March. "I am all alone and it makes me mad." The era was the Thirties, when Tamiroff was billed as "Man of a Hundred Faces," Stroheim was "The Man You Love to Hate" and Lorre was "Mister Murder". True, the identity-tags which dogged Hollywood's European colony have fallen into disuse, even where the owners haven't. Veidt was an early casualty, a victim like Lorre of blood pressure, a stroke and his own image. Lugosi, a celebrated Reinhardt Hamlet reduced to vampiric encounters with Abbott and Costello and Mother Riley, died in 1956. The British contingent—Laughton, Atwill, Zucco—has dwindled: only Rathbone and Karloff remain. With Greenstreet's death Warners' Casablanca-Marseilles-Berlin hotel complement was irremediably thinned. The rest have ripened into avuncular jollity (Homolka) or stoicism (Paul Lukas) or both (Tamiroff). Rathbone contrives to keep a severe upper-lip, but Karloff's Dr. Scarabus recently confessed to Hazel Court that as a sorcerer he just didn't "have it any more." In fact it was Karloff, several years ago, who stated that the last straw for him was the type of film in which "some damned ant" would come crawling out of "some damned great hole."

Karloff is one of the few actors who accepted his synonymy with horror as being natural and useful. Lorre detested it. At first this hatred was uncompromising and idealistic. Starving, sleeping out on park benches, he turned down murderers' roles by the dozen. Journalists interviewing him on a Hitchcock set, their thoughts full of *M*, had the macabre experience of listening to this cherubic would-be comedian enlarging knowledgeably on the dramatic significance of the

clown. In time the comedy parts came: even better, highly individual creations (Joel Cairo, Mr. Moto, Cornelius Latimer Leyden) in which sinister insights were cloaked in darts of eccentric humour. He grew sleek and prosperous; tongue-in-cheek, he allowed glossy magazines to devote a centre spread to pictures of Lorre, the hirsute judo-expert, taking a Turkish bath.

His post-war experiences were on the whole unhappy. A frustrating return to Germany, where he directed and starred in the evidently hard-hitting and unpopular *Der Verlorene*, affected him bitterly. Four marriages, surplus weight, legal actions, a run of unconsidered roles as alcoholics and megalomaniacs, left him largely given over to self-parody. The wit, charm, gentleness and erudition for which he was known personally found too little chance of expression on-screen. Bogart, an old and close friend, was dead. Lorre himself almost died in 1959, until a Spanish doctor succeeded in bringing down his blood pressure by applying leeches. He advertised watch-straps on TV; appeared in *Wagon Train* and horror-spoofs for Roger Corman; was preparing a film to star Shirley MacLaine. "I am all alone and . . ." (a phrase he must have uttered many times in movies) . . . "it makes me mad!"

* * *

"Finally there was a very enthusiastic and tousle-headed schoolboy, who sat with the gloomy air of a young man whose dignity has been wounded, evidently distressed by his eighteen years. This infant was already the head of an

ABOVE: PETER LORRE TO THE Mth DEGREE.
CARTOON BY RICHARD WINNINGTON.



PETER LORRE (RASKOLNIKOV) AND THURSTON HALL IN THE VON STERNBERG VERSION OF "CRIME AND PUNISHMENT".

independent group of conspirators, as it came out afterwards to the surprise of everyone." (*The Possessed*).

Dostoevsky's incisive little character-study could hardly provide a more accurate description of the Lorre prototype. Boyish in his intensity, baby-faced in thwarted anger, silkily menacing one moment, squealing with outrage the next, he turned his limited stature (he was 5 feet 4 inches) and his ageless features to extraordinary advantage. Incongruity was his staple commerce, and in Bogart's Sam Spade he found his most indulgent, amused and complementary partner. "I am not a violent man, Mr. Spade, but if you do not give me the black bird I shall be compelled to murder you without mercy." Punctuating his breathless demands with gutturally hesitant "ers", rhyming these irresolute vowels with "bird" (which somehow came out "burd"), "murder" and that absurdly bathetic "without murcy," the pointed gun was the sole simplicity that belied all the surrounding ornamentation. And there was plenty of that: gardenia-scented visiting-card, fastidious gloves and cane set fussily down beside the rakish trilby with upturned brim, hair curled with careful insouciance, forehead rippling like soft leather, the features more mobile, the eyes wider and whiter than James Baldwin's in a TV interview.

The gun changes hands, Bogart lashes out a clip to the jaw, Lorre makes a minutely concerned examination of his fragile, damaged features in the mirror. (He always protested most shrilly when arrested or struck: Mary Astor's unladylike onslaught provoked a memorably indignant "Look what she has done to my face!") Eventually the gun is returned. Like the flash of a lizard's tongue: "And now, Mr. Spade, you will kindly place your hands behind the back of your head . . ." Bogart laughs, the wry laugh of a man who candidly admits for the first and last time that he has underestimated an adversary.

Lorre took an infectious delight in ringing the changes, whether hair, clothes, facial expressions, plot situations or the trappings of orthodox villainy. My memories of the eight or nine Mr. Moto films in the Thirties are hazy, except that they stand out as the most entertaining of that series-studded decade. Moto himself, the charming Japanese detective with a talent for judo, was more enigmatically arresting than all the Charlie Chans, Bulldog Drummonds, Saints and Falcons.

The stories were smartly complex, sustaining their illusion right up to the climax, whether Moto was protecting the crown of the Queen of Sheba or foiling a plot to blow up the French fleet in the Suez Canal. Moreover one never really knew which side of the law he was on, especially since he was a dab at disguise, impersonating archaeologists, Chinatown antique-dealers, or some kindly, bearded old gentleman who turned out in the end to be the crook.

Not that Lorre left things at physical metamorphosis. Dr. Gogel's totally bald head, magnificent fur-trimmed overcoat and cynically raised right eyebrow in *Hands of Orlac* merely accentuated the craven look in his eye, presenting the image of a defeated clown within the trappings of a demented genius. The "Hairless Mexican" in *Secret Agent* was only externally played for broad comedy—aboriginally woolly hair, enormous lapels and winged collar, pocket handkerchief spilling out over his chest, check overcoat flapping around his ankles. But beneath all this, and the outrageous pidgin English ("You are having the early morning, husband-and-wife, little bedroom games, yes?"—this to Gielgud bestowing a brusque breakfast kiss on Madeleine Carroll's cheek), could be glimpsed the amoral assassin, twitching uneasily at the droning single organ-note inside the Swiss church, rocking with laughter on learning that he has killed the wrong man, staring with chill hatred at the woman he fears may be interfering in his business relations with Ashenden.

The Mexican also made no bones about his dislike of dogs and children. This was yet another switch on Lorre's more familiar character of child-lover, buying little girls balloons and apples, amusing Nova Pilbeam with his chiming watch (what matter if the nice stout gentleman *does* have a scarred forehead, a white blaze in his forward-combed hair, and laughs too boisterously at practical jokes?). Lorre's murderers were themselves little more than children, sucking sweets out of a paper bag, selecting the juiciest peaches, fascinated by knives in shop windows, humming obsessively to themselves, protected by mysterious middle-aged ladies from those subtle, almost imperceptible spasms of rage which seemed for a moment to have wiped every trace of humanity from that bland moon-face.

These outward symptoms of inward warping harked perpetually back to the aching, frenzied attempt at self-justification in his most incomparable performance—Peter Kürten in *M*. "I am always forced to move along the streets, and always someone is behind me. It is I. I sometimes feel I am myself behind me, but I cannot escape . . . a little voice is speaking inside my head, urging me, pursuing me . . . and afterwards, standing before a poster, I read what I have done. But I can't help it . . . I loathe it . . . I can't help it . . ." Pursued himself by the *réclame* of this one role, unable to shake it off, Lorre might almost have been making an ironic commentary on the frustrations of his subsequent career.

* * *

If anything, Lorre's generation of anti-Nazi exiles suffered even steeper declines in their Hollywood fortunes than those actresses—Cortese, Prèsle, Lindfors, Michèle Morgan—who found themselves temporarily doomed to a narrow and unviable character range of torchsingers, prostitutes, Indian squaws and skivvies. For one thing, the men generally stayed on, persuaded no doubt by the occasional good role which came their way. Admittedly Lugosi, Dracula-bound and soon drug-addicted, was an extreme and perhaps unduly acquiescent case. Even so Veidt must have found it a long way from Reinhardt's theatre to interminable spy roles and Red Skelton vehicles; Lorre from Brecht premières to *The Boogie Man Will Get You*.

Yet Lorre's career was not and could never have been wholly sad. By all accounts he had great resilience, courage, persistence and intelligence. Born Laszlo Loewenstein, son of a prosperous Hungarian tradesman, he ran away at 15 to

be an actor. He gained stage experience in Breslau, Zurich, Vienna, eking out his meagre salary by clowning in restaurants to get a square meal, once suffering his parents to put him to work in a bank. His first recorded film was *Frühlingserwachen* (*Spring's Awakening*) in 1928, from Wedekind's play about father-son strife. The "Rebel Without a Cause" theme was currently popular in Germany, and there is an unexpected resemblance between Sal Mineo and the photographed Peter Lorre of that time—tousled hair, arched and questioning eyebrows, pouting lips, the limpid, startled eyes of a hurt puppy.

Arriving in Berlin with ten marks in his pocket, Lorre plunged into the avant-garde theatre. His first part was in Elisabeth Hauptmann's *Happy End*, a story of the Salvation Army joining forces with Chicago gangsters, starring Helene Weigel and Oscar Homolka, with songs and production by Bert Brecht. The play failed (Brecht later disowned it) but an enthusiastic notice brought Lorre into prominence. Fritz Lang pencilled him in for *M* on the understanding that he accepted no other film offers until its completion. Lorre kept his word, meanwhile playing leads in two more Brecht productions—*Mann ist mann* with Weigel, and *St. Joan of the Stockyards*, a revised version of *Happy End* broadcast by Berlin Radio with Weigel and Fritz Kortner. A photograph of Lorre in *Mann ist mann*, heavily made up in what looks like Japanese No style, armed literally to the teeth, hints at the highly individual and mannered nature of his performance, which so satisfied Brecht and puzzled Brecht's critics.

"All feelings must be externalised," Brecht wrote. Lorre's fragmentary, episodic style of acting, he went on, was meant to show a man not as a consistent whole but as a contradictory, ever-changing character whose unity comes "despite, or rather by means of, interruptions and jumps." The whole sequence of *Gesten* (attitudes) demanded a leisurely timing, certain episodes being given a silent-film quality. (John Willett's *Theatre of Bertolt Brecht*.)

In the event much of Lorre's impact in *M* seems to have been derived from Brecht's teaching. Between the first ominous line ("That's a nice ball you're playing with") and the final agonised testimony before the kangaroo court, Lorre's performance consisted solely of vivid, jagged mime-insets, all the more effective in their brevity, stabbing through the leisurely, smoke-filled routine of police investigation. Hunched over a brandy on a café terrace, like some predatory rodent almost hidden by an ivy trellis; rubbing his knuckles together in greasy frustration when a potential victim is met by her mother; scuttling panic-stricken through a lumber-room prison; pulling ogreish faces in his bedroom mirror; whimpering pathetically over a broken pen-knife and an unyielding door-lock—unity through "interruptions and jumps". Easy to see why Chaplin hailed Lorre as the world's greatest actor; unsurprising that Lorre himself, having created what remains the cinema's definitive portrait of one kind of sexual psychopath, should turn his back resolutely on murder and look for fresh worlds, comedy worlds, to conquer.

* * *

Lorre made nine other German-Austrian films before Goebbels, a fan like Chaplin, started asking awkward questions about the actor's refusal to appear in further UFA productions. Little is known about them beyond the names of the directors (notably Alexis Granowsky) and the interesting casts—Anna Sten, Alfred Abel, Hedy Lamarr, Gerda Maurus, Sybille Schmitz, Mosjoukine, Dagover, Homolka, Fröhlich. *Monte Carlo Madness* concerned an operetta cruiser with a crazy captain (Hans Albers); *The Luggage of Mr. O.F.* was a small-town comedy-fantasy; *Fünf von der Jazzband* speaks, one imagines, for itself.

One would like to know more about Pabst's *De haut en bas*, a lighthearted treatment of tenement life with Gabin and Michel Simon. This was Lorre's only French film, made the year (1934) he arrived penniless from Vienna. *M* had just

been screened in America, and again the offers of murderers' roles started pouring in. Instead he came to England for *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, where Hitchcock—delighted by the rushes—built up his role, regaling him the while with offset jokes at which Lorre, whose command of English was microscopic, obligingly roared his head off.

The following year he sailed for America. Coming after eight months of self-imposed unemployment there, *The Hands of Orlac* possibly satisfied his qualms about artistic integrity on the grounds of tradition—the Veidt-Krauss version had become a silent classic—and the original's tragic overtones. (Actors are vulnerably prone to such optimism.) At any rate the German cameraman-director, Karl Freund, had a Gothic field-day, with Lorre's crazed surgeon setting up a wax image of his unattainable ideal in his house and spending idolatrous nights playing the organ to her.

Lorre's acceptance of his next role, Raskolnikov in Sternberg's weirdly fascinating *Crime and Punishment*, is easy to understand. He was well-cast too in *Crack Up*, as a neurotically sensitive espionage fanatic after America's bomber-plans. But the title was prophetic, and the price of his escape from Mr. Moto was a cycle of lurid B-pictures illuminated solely (if C. A. Lejeune and the *Kine Weekly* are to be believed) by *Stranger on the Third Floor*. Lejeune rated it a rare film which really got inside the mind of a murderer. The *Kine* found it a shade too intelligent and elusive for popular halls. Weight is lent to this verdict by my certain knowledge (and chagrin) that it never turned up at the Empire, Bacup.

From then on his career was very much a hit-and-miss affair, with some of the misses (*The Chase*, *The Beast with Five Fingers*) more rewarding from Lorre's point of view than box-office hits like *Casablanca*. *The Chase* is undoubtedly the most bizarre film he ever made, playing cynical bodyguard to a sadistic racketeer (Steve Cochran) in an atrociously sumptuous mansion complete with gold-encrusted telephones, petrified wife (Michèle Morgan), a bull mastiff in the cellar who eats visitors after dinner, and a diabolical car with a back-seat accelerator. The climax finds Lorre twitching at the wheel with Cochran urging him into a 100 m.p.h. race for the level-crossing against a looming express train.

Though mauled quite venomously by the critics (shades of
(Continued on page 156)

"THE MASK OF DIMITRIOS": LORRE AND SYDNEY GREENSTREET.





GOLD

THE NEW BRUTALISM

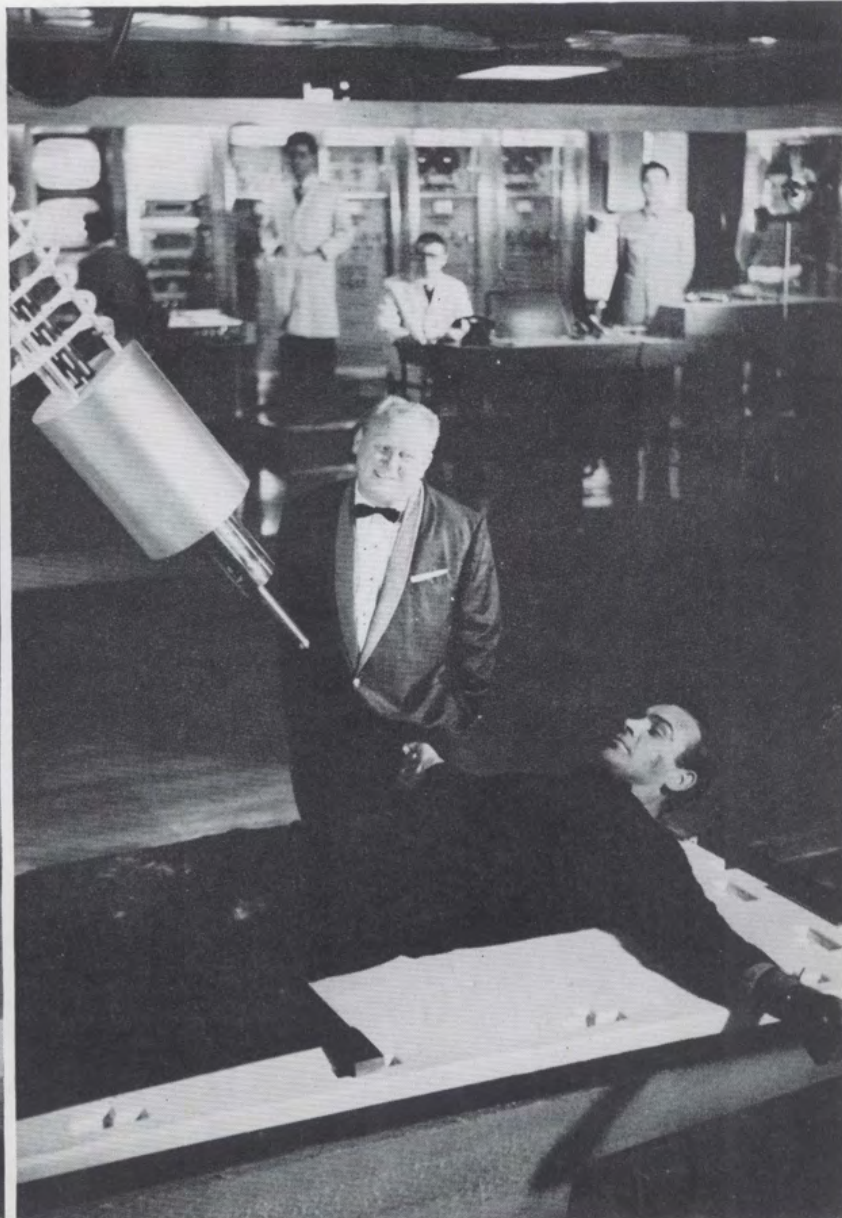
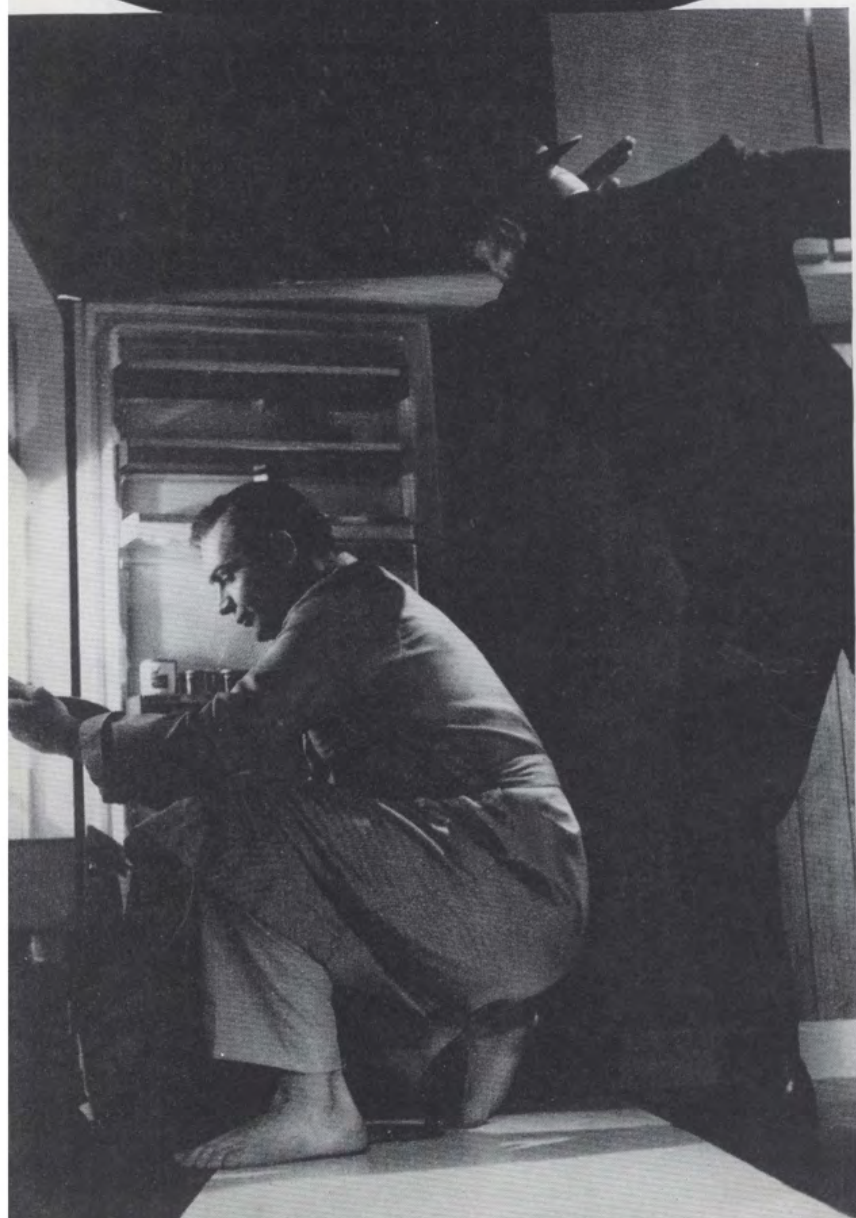
James Bond gets a new director (Guy Hamilton instead of Terence Young) and a new leading lady, Honor Blackman. Otherwise all seems splendidly unchanged . . .

LEFT: Sean Connery and Naja Regin.

BELOW LEFT: Bond under judo attack by Oddjob (Harold Sakata).

BELOW: 007 on the operating table; Goldfinger (Gert Froebe), the golfing master-criminal who plans to rob Fort Knox, prepares torture by Laser beam.

RIGHT: After the battle: Bond and submerged victim.



FINGER



through the looking glass

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH



TO START ON AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE; I first planned this article as an enquiry into realism in the cinema—what is it? who are its exponents? what are they really up to? and, in particular, what if any is the difference between realism and naturalism? As I saw it, the key to the problem lay in the relationship between a way of looking at the world, which would be realism, and a technique of representation or *mimesis*, which was all that naturalism could reasonably claim to be, and the question would be to decide whether a realistic director could legitimately use techniques which were not naturalistic without forfeiting his status as a realist. I still think this is a basic question, but it is fast becoming academic. It is an historical question which can be made to involve the whole of the history of the cinema and the post-war period in particular. But it is not a live issue or of immediate critical relevance at this moment, when the cinema has different idols and ideals, different intentions and ways of executing them, from those of ten or twenty years ago.

There is another reason (or perhaps it is the same reason, but in another guise) why the problem seems to me on reflection to have been wrongly posed, and that is the elusive character of the supposedly central concepts. Naturalism, which under one aspect appears to be a technique, is also a great deal less and perhaps a great deal more. It is less, conspicuously, in many American films, where the central interest so often lies first in character and the conflict of personalities and points of view, and secondly in the conscious manipulation of conventions in which naturalism plays only a subordinate role. Naturalism, in the American cinema, is often nothing more than a pinch of spice, giving a tang of common reality to a stylised situation. It does not provide a deep-seated impulse which could ever seriously affect the problem of representation. With many European directors, however, naturalism clearly means more than just technique. To Zavattini and De Sica it is a whole way of seeing, theoretically realistic but in practice divorced from any wider realistic aim. To Renoir it is even more than this. It is a way not of seeing but of feeling; and Renoir cannot be understood without first understanding that for him, as for his father, naturalism is a direct expression of his feeling for nature and comes intentionally before and not after realism in his work.

There was a double danger then in trying to attach fixed meanings to the old terminology: the dangers of astrological criticism and of the bed of Procrustes. The danger of what I call astrological criticism consisted in siting the cinema under a preordained pattern of planets and constellations with abstract names like naturalism, realism and so on, and plotting its history in terms of their interaction, as if the concepts were fixed things, and, worse, as if they governed in some way what actually can and does happen. The danger of the bed of Procrustes was that, given the concepts, one would chop, stretch and squeeze the films to fit the pattern of ideas. And this, notably in the case of Renoir, is a singularly graceless procedure. To try to bottle up the magic of *Boudou sauvé des Eaux* or *Une Partie de Campagne* in a dingy container labelled according to -ism, is critical lunacy turned judicial murder. Or rather, since great films are always more resilient, and Procrustes' bed more fragile, than the critic likes to think, the result

would not be murder but suicide. And I had no desire to commit suicide for such a cause.

There remains, of course, danger at the opposite end. By refusing to define general categories and to use them according to clear definitions, or even by abandoning the categories entirely, one runs the risk of losing all critical perspective. The categories are useful in this respect and are worth preserving. But this is no reason to suppose them immutable or eternal. They must vary with the art they seek to delimit, and it seems to me that recent developments in the cinema have been such as to demand, if not abandoning the old categories, at least redefining what is meant by them.

There is an analogy here with the criticism of painting which may serve to make the point clearer. To contemporary eyes in the fourteenth century, Giotto's painting seemed unbelievably naturalistic in its portrayal of space and reproduction of visual surfaces, which by the standards of the age it undoubtedly was. But standards change, and by those of Renaissance or Flemish painting Giotto no longer appears naturalistic in this way. But the Renaissance valuation of Giotto as a precursor of naturalism has now been reversed. Modern criticism has tended to lay more stress on something very specific to Giotto—his power of representing volume and mass. But this revaluation of Giotto could only take place after naturalism had run its course and dissolved into impressionism, and after we had assimilated the lesson of Cézanne. Without Cézanne and then Cubism and the rest it would never have happened, and it is thanks to them if we can now look at earlier painting in a different, to us more revealing way. In other words criticism, even the most theoretical, must learn always to match itself, concretely, to what is actually there.

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Ten years ago, when neo-realism still enjoyed an undisputed, if slightly nostalgic, critical hegemony, the problem of naturalism and realism was easily stated in terms of film-making practice. Direct statements were preferred to oblique, common observation to individual vision, documentation to fantasy. Facts, it appeared, spoke for themselves, and the director could make his facts speak simply by training his camera on them. Naturalism and realism were in principle separable, but in practice tended to coincide. They coincided in much of Renoir, in Visconti's *Ossessione* and Rossellini's *Roma città aperta*. They did not however coincide in *Voyage in Italy* or in *Senso*, nor would they have coincided in Zavattini's unrealised project of filming, with perfect naturalism, "Ninety minutes in the Life of . . .". But what Rossellini, Visconti and De Sica-Zavattini were up to, what their intentions were and how they proposed to achieve them, could all be explained in terms of a model of the two central -isms. It is no criticism of the model to say that it found no place for Cocteau or even Mizoguchi or Welles, for either deliberately or through ignorance it had excluded them from its terms of reference. And it is even less of a criticism to say, as I am now saying, that it was to prove inadequate to accommodate the work of Resnais or Godard or Demy. That it led to a misrepresentation of Renoir is perhaps a genuine complaint; but on the whole, for what it set out to do, the model worked remarkably well.

The model puts forward the relationship of realism and naturalism basically as a problem about ends and means. The end is understanding and the means is observation. (If this sounds more like social science than art, the blame belongs to the neo-realists, and beyond them, ultimately, to Zola.) By detached observation of events as they did or might have happened, one is naturally led in *Roma città aperta* to an understanding of what the Italian resistance was about, what it was like to be involved and why people acted as they did. In *Ossessione* again we are invited to share, but still from the outside, as observers, the experience of a desperate and fatal love affair, and to understand the forces that determined its course. Implicit in both films is the assumption that the material is more or less self-explanatory, and the director need not do more than record what is actually there and everything will fall into place. The world being what it is, the meaning of events is accessible to observation and direct inference from what is observed in a very simple way. There is no conflict between ends and means, because the structure of the world and of our perception is such that observation and understanding are indissolubly linked. You just can't go wrong.

But, of course, one can go wrong. The fatalism of *Ossessione* is not entailed by Visconti's technique of observing material conditions. It works its way into the interstices of the film against the theory, by an act of choice on the part of the director, and once there cannot be discounted. Rossellini's film is open to a different and subtler objection, one that concerns the role of the spectator relative to the film and derives from a weakness in the theory as such. It is a long time since I saw the film, but as I remember it there is a scene in which the priest is called upon to witness the torture by the Nazis of a communist fellow-resister, the calculation being that if the communist won't talk, the vicarious torture inflicted on the priest by watching the other man suffer will be enough to force the priest to talk instead, in order to save his friend. What brings home the moral implications of this scene is the fact that the audience and the priest are in the same position relative to the communist, and the audience is being allowed a special insight into the mind of one protagonist by being forced to share his dilemma. It is a stroke of genius on Rossellini's part, but it makes nonsense of the theory.

Despite these objections, much of the theory that yokes naturalistic observation to realistic explanation remains

"AMORE IN CITTA". ZAVATTINI'S 1953 PRODUCTION BASED ON A SERIES OF 'REAL LIFE EPISODES' AROUND ROME.



aesthetically viable. But the chain was bound to break eventually. One of the assumptions of realism is that patterns of cause and effect can be brought out into the open and presented in artistic terms, that there are open, visible connections between events which can be represented directly on film. But they may be hidden and difficult of access, in which case it is the director's job to reveal them. Or they may require various forms of selection and emphasis, which he can if he wishes provide, but only at the cost of abandoning his role of neutral and dispassionate observer; in other words of abandoning naturalism. Alternatively, in order to preserve the fiction of naturalistic observation, he may be obliged to renounce what seems to him not only a true insight into reality, but one which assumes nothing that is not in some way accessible to the camera. Alternatively again, he may be convinced that reality is not after all entirely accessible, but that it is more important to state the inaccessible than to preserve a scrupulous façade of confining himself to the natural methods of the camera. Visconti chose the first path, which was already implicit in *Ossessione*. *Senso*, with its rich historical setting re-created from contemporary prints and its stylised acting, not to mention a heavy dose of Marxist theory, is a realistic, but hardly a naturalistic film. Zavattini chose the second—uncritical naturalism—and Rossellini, with *Voyage in Italy*, the third—naturalism with supernatural overtones. Curiously enough it was the escape route chosen by Zavattini, the scriptwriter whose project for a completely naturalistic film never materialised, which was to prove most significant for the future.

It is worth while, therefore, while the bed of Procrustes is still approximately serviceable, considering briefly the logic of Zavattini's position in terms of the model we have proposed. Zavattini's idea was to film, in natural time, on natural locations, the natural behaviour of a man just going about his daily business, just living, with the camera as a totally disinterested and neutral observer following him around unobtrusively, pretending more or less not to be there. This is, still in terms of the model, naturalism pushed to its logical conclusion, a calendar of accidental happenings with an absolute minimum of interpretation of background or intention and indeed of meaning of any kind. Short of the ultimate and unrealisable absurdity, which would entail denying the camera access to the character's intentions entirely, objective naturalism could go no further. It had reached a dead end, and the "extension in time of photographic objectivity" (trust André Bazin to come up with this authentic dead-end definition) had come to rest, metaphorically speaking, among the dustbins. But in the process two things had happened. One is that along the naturalist-realist axis a number of films had been produced which are by any standards great; and the second that the cinema had learnt to observe, and had learnt something of what observation can and cannot do. One road had been closed, but an indication was left of other roads which were still open.

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It seems to me no longer possible to consider the problem of naturalism—let alone realism—in the relatively simple terms of the neo-realist model. The old categories do not fit the more sophisticated aims and procedures of the cinema in the last five years. Among other things the cinema has evolved a form of naturalism which bears precious little resemblance to realism as it was understood by the neo-realists, but is also very different from naturalism itself in the old definition. Resnais' *Muriel* is a salient example of this.



"MURIEL": THE NIGHT STREETS OF BOULOGNE.

When Tom Milne claims, writing in the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, that *Muriel* "could almost be described as the cinema's first naturalistic film," and yet is very different in conception and effect from anything Zavattini envisaged, he is deliberately and with good reason making nonsense of the traditional categories. It could be maintained that Zavattini and Resnais had ultimately the same ideal in mind—the exact representation of the texture of reality—but that they differed over the path to be taken to achieve it; that the ideal remains the same even if both method and results are different. But I do not see how one can in practice treat films in this way, as wayward approximations to an ideal. It may be that at the back of everything there is an area of common ground, an ideal of representation, but if this is so it accounts for very little of what is actually in a film. To take refuge in a definition of naturalism as *mimesis*, representation of reality, is still begging all the basic questions: "representation, how?" and "what reality?"

The question of representation can perhaps be answered, rather schematically, in this way. Taken at face value Zavattini's procedure amounts to mechanically transferring a piece of real life, *en bloc*, first on to two-dimensional celluloid, then on to a screen, then on to or into the spectator—from events to physical images to mental images. There is a progressive dilution of impact, in that the mental image remembered after seeing the film is weaker than the physical image originally on the screen, and this in turn makes a weaker impression than the event itself might have done. But, dilution apart, supposing that human beings were recording machines, this would count as a perfect representation of reality. The trouble is that our perception does not work in this way, and it is absurd to suppose that it could. To begin with, the machinery is far from perfect, so much so that it can hardly count as machinery at all. If a film-maker aspires, as Zavattini apparently did, to communicate only objective facts,

he will still require a more forceful method of presentation to break through to his audience. And who is to say that it is only objective facts that can be communicated?

The whole idea of mechanical communication breaks down all along the line as soon as it is admitted that we are dealing in all cases with people and not with objects or computers. The character in a film is a person, so is the director and so is the spectator. The character has thoughts, which are his own, but to which the author, who created him, presumably has access. The author or director can, without loss of integrity or fairness, choose how to present his characters and interpret their actions. He has the double problem not only of reproducing their behaviour but also of finding an artistic means of exteriorising their inner world. The spectator, finally, has the job of interpreting in his own terms the material offered him by the film, sifting it as it comes in and puzzling over it afterwards. The weakness of objective naturalism is that on the one hand it demands the impossible by expecting mechanical observation to be possible, and on the other hand vastly impoverishes itself by refusing to take advantage of the imaginative resources which the other system reveals.

Resnais in *Muriel* makes two assumptions which run counter to accepted naturalistic ideas: one is, quite simply, that his characters are people; and the second is that the spectator's faculties of perception and understanding work, non-mechanistically, in the way I have described. As for his own role in the proceedings, he probably sees himself, in his usual self-effacing way, as little more than a catalyst. By allowing both character and spectator to function as human beings, he aims (mixing the metaphor) to short-circuit the communicative process, to bring the spectator into the film and the film out to the spectator directly, by-passing the director entirely. It is no longer a matter of reproducing images but of re-creating experiences. The process is liable to go wrong, because it is ambitious and demands a lot from

the spectator in the way of sympathy and sheer hard work. But if it does work, and the spectator is drawn into the film as Resnais would like him to be, then the effect can be extraordinary. The effect, or the illusion, of intimacy is so overwhelming, and yet so naturally obtained, that one is surprised, if one has liked the film, to be reminded, generally by someone who has not liked it, that Resnais' procedure is in fact extremely idiosyncratic and contrived, and therefore by definition not naturalistic.

If one looks a little closer, however, at the way Resnais achieves his effect, the point of setting the question in terms of naturalism versus non-naturalism soon becomes clear after all. Resnais and Cayrol may use a different set of philosophical props, but they nevertheless share with the objective naturalists a basic respect for the separateness of their material. The artistry, indeed artificiality, of the technique, the dovetailing of sound and images, and the creation of a private symbolism within the film, which seem like directorial intervention at its most obtrusive, are in fact only a shorthand which enables more to be said more rapidly than would otherwise be the case. This shorthand the spectator must learn to decipher in order to make sense for himself of what is in the film, and it is through his own effort of projection into the situation so loosely encompassed by the images that he comes to understand, to live with the characters, in and out of their private and public worlds. Cayrol has spoken of the "*disponibilité*" of the characters in his work, their obstinate refusal, once created, to act simply as puppets of their creator. Certainly there is no attempt in *Muriel* to make them act as mouthpieces for the authors. They are not there, as they would be in Bergman or even Antonioni, to express the authors' conception on the screen.

Another equally significant point is the way the spectator is not allowed to identify with any of the characters. By observing and thinking about what is observed he can come to inhabit their space and to share their situation. But he is in a position like that of the stranger in Boulogne whose question "Where is the centre?" is brusquely answered with a "*Vous y êtes*"—"You're there already." There is no centre. Or if there is, the rapidly changing series of viewpoints makes it impossible to discover. However well one comes to know them from various angles, the characters remain other people, in art as they would in life. And *Muriel* remains, because of this, an observation of life, infinitely more sophisticated than most, human and not mechanical, intuitive and not behaviouristic, but still fundamentally an observation, and as such a completely naturalistic film.

It is not easy, after *Muriel*, to readapt to the visual world of neo-realism. To a generation attuned to large screens and Eastman Colour, the small square screen and grainy black-and-white newsreel photography of *Roma città aperta* seem much as Giotto must have seemed to the contemporaries of Masaccio—rather dated and inadequate. A brave attempt, considering the techniques then available, but still crude and unsatisfactory. But if we judge *Roma città aperta* in this way we do it an injustice. *Roma città aperta* is, and was always intended to be, a document. The grainy photography is nothing like what we actually see in real life, but it does give the impression of authentic reportage. Rossellini seems to be saying "This happened. I was there, and I shot it as best I could," and not, as Resnais might, "Imagine that this is happening, and that you are there, while I am busily fuelling your imagination." Also, as I mentioned above, Rossellini encourages identification while Resnais repulses it. In *Muriel*

the film aspires to be the spectator's present world, but the characters remain other people. In *Roma città aperta* it is a past and different world, but it becomes real when we are allowed, momentarily, to identify with the hero. The procedures could hardly be more different. But whatever the mechanism involved, two principles remain inviolate: one is that one must observe first in order to understand, and the second is that the real world is more than just the director's plaything or ground. One is tempted to say that these are the two basic principles which must always be respected if representation is to count as naturalistic.

But if this is all naturalism is about, what then? All that one has really succeeded in saying is that critical terms can shift their emphasis, and change with changes in the art they aim to describe; and this in a sense is all that I set out to do. But there is more to it than that. It does not matter particularly what name one gives to the area of common ground between *Roma città aperta* and *Muriel*. It does matter to see where there is common ground and where there are differences, to consider what the directors are actually doing, and to note how everything they do revolves around the same basic problem of *mimesis*. Procedures for dealing with the problem are invented, abandoned, rediscovered and applied in different contexts, all the time. The same procedure may serve many different purposes, and conversely different procedures may be adapted to a single end. The range of variation is enormous, and it seems pointless invidiously to single out one approach as coming closest to the ideal, when the ideal itself is subject to change, and indeed probably does not exist.

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What has happened to Zavattini's idea of shooting a film in natural time? It has not in fact died the natural death one expected it would. Its ultimate dead-end application has come recently in an eight-hour film called *Sleep* which the BBC should consider using for overnight shows to celibate insomniacs (the married would greet it only, I fear, with a slight sense of *déjà vu*). More fruitful uses of the principle have been Hitchcock's *Rope*, and Agnès Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7*. In *Rope* the natural time, like the other hyper-naturalistic devices that Hitchcock uses from time to time, is clearly a gimmick to create a particular kind of suspense. Blending naturalness with artificiality within a situation is one of the master's most authentic metaphysical specialities, and the naturalism of Zavattini is neither here nor there. *Cléo* is more Zavattinian, though, observation for the sake of observation. But it is a very personal film, which in the eyes of the true naturalist is of course heresy, and Varda cannot resist using subjective devices. She fills in the backing of *Cléo*'s song so that it comes over not as it actually sounded in rehearsal but as *Cléo* imagines it sounding at some future concert or on record. The film is also carried by implication further outside the naturalistic framework by the suggestive little symbolic episode of the silent movie with the hero whose life varied alarmingly with the colour of the glasses he was wearing. Most important of all, the use of natural time itself has an interior dramatic function. An hour and a half is a long time if, like *Cléo*, you are waiting to know if you have cancer; and this perhaps is the theme of the film—what time can be and can feel like in that position. Not unlike the Hitchcock, in fact.

What, secondly, has happened to the naturalists' shift of emphasis away from action on to behaviour? The answer appears, paradoxically, to lie in the myth-mongering of *Moderato Cantabile* and the high stylisation of *Il Mare*. The

threatened collapse into triviality has been stayed, in effect, and the naturalistic insistence on unquestioning external observation has been deviated into puzzle-making. Because in these films very little is given in the way of normal human motivation, the characters seem, if they are not simply indulging in a little private game amongst themselves, to be subject to some strange extra-terrestrial control. Only the landscapes are real, and even they, by an arbitrary process of selection and distortion, have an unnatural quality which makes them very different from the vibrant sensuous natural background of Truffaut or Renoir. And yet this Martian cinema is rooted, ultimately, in the same earth.

What, lastly, of the development of photographic techniques? The enemy of naturalism in this field is clear for all to see. It is the old war-horse of expressionism, with its significant camera-angles, symbolic lighting effects and emotive close-ups. But the naturalistic ideal of a neutral camera is less easily pinned down. Colour and 'scope are usually thought of as aids to naturalism, and generally speaking so they are. They discourage certain forms of artifice, and reassert the claims of normal vision. But, quite apart from the fact that colour can of course be used non-naturalistically, the question still remains whether naturalistic colour (in *Muriel*, for example) isn't really all too often a fake, and whether real naturalism doesn't lie rather in the direction of hand-held camera, black and white, with no studio lighting to improve the picture. Eastman Colour with gauzes and batteries of floodlamps may produce a better visual imitation of a given scene, but is this really what is wanted? Is it not more important, as Rossellini discovered with *Roma città aperta*, and Godard and others have rediscovered since, to give the feeling that the camera was there when the event took place? Once again the ideals seem to differ, and to bear no necessary relation to particular techniques.

The example of *Lola* is particularly revealing. *Lola* is a magical film, a fable of love in a completely natural setting. It is shot (by Coutard) strictly within naturalistic convention, without lights, with the camera normally at eye level casually absorbing the physical background, following the characters, never anticipating, moving about to pick up dialogue as it is spoken, acting as an unseen observer who is close to the scene but never part of it. The dialogue too is naturalistic—easy, slangy and occasionally elliptical. But for all that *Lola* is not really a naturalistic film. Little tricks of style give this away first: dialogue which is in fact too pat, condensed as only French can be (but rarely is); a slow-motion sequence; leit-motifs in the music which anticipate rather than crystallise a mood. These serve to carry the film outwards, away from naturalistic convention and day to day realities, into an implausible twilight world of fairy tale and imagination. The most extraordinary effect of all is the transfiguration of the photography. Much of Coutard's work for Godard is positively ugly, fuzzy at the edges, short on contrast, balance and depth. With Demy these limitations are transcended. Heavy shadows contrast with incandescent whiteness, not through any artifice or willed effect, but because the camera sees it that way necessarily. The fact that a correct aperture setting for an interior will render the view outside the window hopelessly over-exposed, and that in a subsequent exterior shot the resulting whiteness must be eliminated, this fact for Demy is not just an irritating necessity of natural camera, but is used spontaneously for its intrinsic symbolic overtones. Indoors is where we live, trapped by circumstance: outside is



a radiant dream, to which we would like to escape. But step outside in reality and the radiance vanishes; the uniform whiteness we saw dissolves into various shades of grey.

This rambling enquiry can be terminated, inconclusively, with *Lola* and the following reflection: the constituents of Demy's world are light and shade, feelings and moods, recurrence and change. It is far, as far as possible, from the world of material realism with which we began. But it is not surprising if we have come so far to so little conclusion. The world of the cinema is a world through the looking-glass, by which I emphatically do not mean that it is a simple mirror-image of reality. Naturalism is the art of the optical laws of reflection and retraction. It looks *at* the mirror, not through it. But it is the world through the looking-glass which is the real challenge—to film-makers and the rest of us alike. The real challenge and the source of endless fascination.



THE LANDSCAPES OF "IL MARE" (ABOVE)
AND "LA REGLE DU JEU" (RIGHT).



RONDO GALANT

THE WORLD OF JACQUES DEMY / RICHARD ROUD

*Willy and Rose
turned out not to be cousins,
just how nobody knows, and so they married
and had children and sang with them and sometimes
singing made Rose cry and sometimes it made Willy
get more and more excited and they lived happily
ever after and the world just went on
being round.—Gertrude Stein,
The World is Round.*

JACQUES DEMY HAS MADE THREE feature films to date. All have been based on original scripts written by him and by him alone. With all the talk about the *politique des auteurs* and the desirability of the director being an *auteur complet*, it may have escaped notice that Demy is the only New Wave director with a considerable body of entirely original work to his credit. The world of his films is a world of his creation. What kind of world is it?

It is a world from which death is absent. And this is rarer than one would think. Even when poor old Aunt Elise of *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg* (1964) finally has to be got rid of, she specifically reassures us, "I have lived a long time, you know. I can leave this world without regrets." In fact, not only do Demy's characters not die, they are even transferred from one film to the next, thus

conferring on them another life. Roland, the disappointed lover of *Lola* (1961), finally finds a kind of happiness in *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*. And we have been assured by Demy of the imminent return of Lola and Cécile in one of his next films. Actually, they have both returned already, but in a different guise.

Lola, for example, is paralleled in *Les Parapluies* by Madeleine: both girls patiently await the return of their lovers—Lola's Michel from his seven years in the Tropics, Madeleine's Guy from his two years in Algeria as well as from his infatuation with another girl. Roland himself has in a sense become the Michel of *Lola*, returning rich to Cherbourg as Michel to Nantes. This doubling of characters also goes on in the same film—the young Cécile in *Lola* is also another younger version of Lola, just as her American sailor is the younger Michel.

All of Demy's films are built on a circular motion. *Lola* begins with the entrance of Michel into Nantes in his big white car and ends with his departure, this time accompanied by the faithful Lola. *La Baie des Anges* (*The Bay of Nice*, Demy's second film: 1963), once the prologue is over, starts with Jackie (Jeanne Moreau) and Jean (Claude Mann) entering the Nice casino, and the film ends with their exit. *Les Parapluies* opens in one Esso garage and ends in another. Like some fantastic cotillion, the characters and themes move in complicated variations but always in circular motion. And this is one reason why death is absent, for death would break the circle, destroy the pattern, stop the dance.

But it is not only death that is absent. So is evil. Demy does not deny the existence of evil; he just isn't interested. He feels that even without evil, there are enough problems in this world. He is interested in love, and that is sufficiently complicated as it is.

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Lola deals with almost every kind of love: disappointed love with Roland and Lola; triumphant love with Lola and Michel; puppy love with Cécile and Frankie; sexual attraction with Frankie and Lola; tentatively genteel love with Roland and Cécile's mother. *Les Parapluies* is a bit more complex, if less complicated. Geneviève and Guy are both 18. When he is sent off to do his military service in Algeria, they swear undying love. Almost in spite of themselves, they both gradually realise—she first—that their love is not strong enough to stand separation. So when she has the chance to marry another, older, man who will give her child by Guy a name, she accepts. Guy returns to Cherbourg, and although he has grown apart from her, his ego cannot at first let him accept the fact that she has betrayed him. But maturity comes, even to Guy, and he marries Madeleine, the patient Grizelda who has always loved him.

La Baie des Anges is Demy's most subtle statement about love. Its apparent subject is the story of a young bank employee who becomes fascinated by gambling and the woman he meets in the casinos. She (Jeanne Moreau) has left her husband and child and wanders from Enghien to Nice, from Deauville to Monte Carlo. At first she treats Jean as a kind of mascot—he seems to bring her luck. By the end of the film, however, in spite of the difference in their ages and characters and the apparent impossibility of their remaining long together, they

miraculously decide to have a go. At least he knows her weakness.

For gambling is but the ostensible subject of the film; it is only a metaphor. Jackie is the kind of woman who has to be reassured *daily* that luck is with her, that God is on her side, and, most important, that she is still sexually attractive. It is only when one considers her passion for daily sorties to the casinos in this light that the film takes on its full meaning and that it can be seen, not as an interruption to the Demy saga, but as an integral part of it. And Jean gets her in the end because he has passed the test, he has accepted her as she is.

"Passes the test": this is a recurring element in Demy's films. Lola has to wait seven years for Michel. Roland only wins Geneviève because he accepts her child by Guy. Madeleine only gets Guy because she has patiently waited until he was ready. Everyone gasped when Demy announced a year or two ago that he wanted to make a film based on the Perrault fairy-tale *Peau d'Ane*. And yet the fairy-tale element in his films is very strong—not the Grimm/grim kind, to be sure, but the more delicate, sophisticated French sort. Actually, the real counterpart to Demy is not Perrault, but somewhat later writers like the Countess d'Aulnoy and Madame Leprince de



LEFT: JEANNE MOREAU AND CLAUDE MANN IN "BAIE DES ANGES",
RIGHT: ALAN SCOTT AND ANNIE DUPEROUX IN "LOLA".



"LA BAIE DES ANGES": JEANNE MOREAU AND CLAUDE MANN.

Beaumont. In stories like *La Belle et la Bête* sensibility comes into its own, and everything seems to work out all right in the end. The bad people are pardoned, and in any case, they weren't really so bad, anyway. "Only in the cinema do people die of love," says (or rather, sings) Geneviève's mother in *Les Parapluies*. "Anyhow, time solves most problems." And Geneviève finally is forced ruefully to admit, "I would have died for him, but why aren't I dead?"

In spite of this tempering cynicism, Demy's preoccupation with romantic love is distinctly unfashionable. So also are the exterior aspects of his world—décors and costumes. He and

Godard may both use white walls, but in Demy's films, they are white in order the better to set off the gracefully twirling iron bedsteads, the art nouveau-ish furniture. Demy's decorative universe would seem to be that in which he grew up—1900 high style as it slowly filtered down through provincial France. It is not slavishly reproduced, and Demy has achieved a strict selection, thus avoiding the claustrophobic effect so many French interiors still create. For all his admiration of Max Ophüls, there is nothing of the gauzy appeal to the past, nothing fusty or old-fashioned about his sets.

His women, too, seem mostly to belong to another age. Jackie in *La Baie des Anges* with her monkey fur, her boas, and her *guêpières* (Gay 90's corsets) comes from another age. As Jean remarks, "I didn't think women like you existed any more." Well, they don't. But nature imitates art, and perhaps they soon will. It is in fact true that several stores in Paris are now offering for sale the highly coloured early Matisse-like wallpaper featured in *Les Parapluies*. (A terrible mistake, says Demy; it would be hell to live with!)

The truth is that Demy is an unashamed sensualist. People are always afraid of bad taste, he says. In *Les Parapluies* he wanted a real riot of colour, and that is exactly what we get. But those who are still haunted by the Bauhaus aesthetic—never more than one colour at a time; straight lines, preferably crossing at right-angles; functional furniture—can't really take Demy's swashing baroque. Or rather, I suspect, they are afraid to let themselves like it. Puritanically, charm is to be resisted. If it doesn't taste bad, it can't be doing you any good.

On the other hand, Demy's film technique is distinctly modern, and he can cut an ellipse with the best of them. (Example: the four shot sequence in *Les Parapluies* after Geneviève and Guy have gone to bed together for the first and only time: from his bedroom, we cut to the entrance to his house, again to the lane, then to Geneviève's street, and finally to her living room with her knitting mother and then—and only then—Geneviève magically runs into frame.) He is also great on movement—the final tracking shot back into the Casino as Jackie and Jean rush out into the light in *La Baie des Anges*; and the scene in *Les Parapluies* when the camera pans along with the just-married Roland's car leaving the church until it sweeps into an exultant close-up of Madeleine: with Geneviève safely married, perhaps she has a chance!

A study of Demy's technique could well be the subject of another article. My point is simply that Demy's sets and costumes are part of his subject matter, and that his predilection for the old-fashioned has been deliberately adopted. To put it crudely, it is not because he doesn't know any better: his directorial technique demonstrates this. Some people have felt, however, that in his two most recent films Demy has been forced by the relative commercial failure of *Lola* to oversimplify, to restrain his natural invention. It is good news, then, that his next film—also a musical, but this time with dancing as well—will mark a return to the construction of *Lola* with its surprises, coincidences, and choreographic complications.

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Demy's literary baggage and cultural universe are slight compared with the encyclopaedic erudition of a Godard. And Kierkegaard is certainly more fashionable than Perrault. But Demy's virtue is to have created his own world and to stick to



"LES PARAPLUIES DE CHERBOURG": CATHERINE DENEUVE OUTSIDE HER UMBRELLA SHOP.

it, slowly elaborating and perfecting his expression of it. One extraordinary example of this is his obsession with Bresson's *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*. This was the first film, he tells us, that showed him what the cinema could do. He was 14 years old, and probably saw it at the Katorza cinema at Nantes! He has now completely annexed it into his own folklore—but minus what many people would consider the important part of the film, the character of Hélène, and the story of her revenge.

Instead, Demy concentrates on the three other characters, chiefly on the mother and daughter. In *Lola*, Mme. Desnoyers (Elina Labourdette) is actually the Agnès (Elina Labourdette) of *Les Dames*. When she shows Roland (Marc Michel) a picture of herself when she was young, it is a still from *Les Dames*. At the same time, Mme. Desnoyers is not only Agnès grown matronly, she is also—and perhaps therefore—the Lucienne Bogaert character, her own mother in *Les Dames*. Like her, Mme. Desnoyers has lost everything; like her, she

to funerals, red wine to Vichy water, the sun to the rain." The provinces to Paris, one might also add. For with the exception of the prologue to *La Baie des Anges*, Demy's films are all set near the sea—Nantes, Cherbourg, Nice, Monte Carlo. *Les Parapluies* and *Lola* seem to be drawn almost directly from his own life growing up in Nantes. The provincial bookshop of *Lola*, the somehow uniquely provincial dinners which are so important in both films . . . Demy's father owned a garage like the one in *Les Parapluies* (Demy claims that he himself can to this day *smell* the difference between Shell and BP), and it would seem that for him, too, the Passage Pomeraye in Nantes was the nerve centre of his sentimental life.

How to sum up? If Godard is Picasso, then Demy is Matisse. No, too *Cahiers*. Godard however does make a good comparison—for the two men have almost as much in common as not. Let's try again: if Godard is a hare, is Demy then a hedgehog? No, the best animal metaphor for Demy is the snail, the sea-snail, or the periwinkle. Gaston Bachelard



LEFT TO RIGHT: "LES DAMES DU BOIS DE BOULOGNE" (ELINA LABOURDETTE, LUCIENNE BOGAERT); "LOLA" (ANNIE DUPEROUX, ELINA LABOURDETTE); "LES PARAPLUIES DE CHERBOURG" (CATHERINE DENEUVE, ANNE VERNON).

saw her furniture being carried off (*Et moi comme une idiote, attachée à mes meubles, mes bergères, mes consoles qui partent*), passing from opulence to poverty in a day. "My husband was a gambler. He had every vice."

In *Les Parapluies*, the mother-daughter relationship of *Les Dames* reappears. Anne Vernon, the mother, even looks a lot like Elina Labourdette—and we must not forget that when Cécile Desnoyers ran away from Nantes, she went to Cherbourg. Once again the mother is a widow in a difficult situation; once again she counts on the charming mature man to marry her daughter and get them out of it. Echoes even of the Cocteau dialogue appear and reappear in Demy's films. To describe the growing separation of Geneviève and Guy, he doesn't hesitate to use the uniquely Cocteau-esque phrase: *Son cœur se détache de lui*.

But the real theme of *Les Dames* is not vengeance but the triumph of love over hate, and we are back again with Demy's *Sleeping Beauty*. "I prefer," he admits, "blue to black, births

tells us that the snail is the only animal who does not build its house in order to have a place to live. Rather, it lives in order to build its house. And it was thought that it builds its house from its own saliva. Like the snail, Demy carries his house with him everywhere; like the snail, his house is created from within; like the snail, his world is intensely self-contained.

The snail is the great example of organic geometry: his shell is circular and spiral, like the circular movements and geometric patterns of Demy's films. Round and round, ever spiralling outwards and yet ever attached to its beginnings, the shell is refuge, protection, and one of the supreme examples of that will to form which alone can make life meaningful. "The shell," wrote Valéry, "stands out from the common disorder of most living organisms. Shells are privileged objects, more intelligible at first glance, and yet on reflection more mysterious than any other." Perhaps it was no accident that Venus Anadyomene was conceived of as bursting upon a startled world from a sea shell.

FILM CLIPS

AS YOU WILL HARDLY have failed to notice by now, my ideas on the cinema have been irrevocably twisted and amissshapen by early exposure to the heady product of Gainsborough in its heyday; things for me have never really been quite the same since James Mason and Stewart Granger went to Hollywood, Margaret Lockwood went to Wilcox and Phyllis Calvert went back to the stage. However, I have always retained a warm regard for James Mason in particular, even when he traded in his boots and riding crop for a sensible lounge suit. Though he never stopped being a star, he did turn out to be rather a formidable actor as well: and, moreover, he has always been willing to take chances on really odd films and wriggled neatly out of any too hasty type-casting, which has meant that hardly ever has he made a film entirely without interest, for one reason or another.

So, naturally, discovering he was in the country for *Lord Jim*, I scurried to meet him. The first impression could hardly have been more spectacular: as the set was closed on the day I went down to the studio, I was sipping a drink quietly while waiting for lunch when suddenly a weird and dishevelled figure irrupted into the bar, trousers torn from thigh to ankle, grizzled beard in wild confusion, and blood pouring from a sizeable head wound. The star in person, fresh from a busy morning dying. Once we were settled down for lunch ("Sit on my blood-free side; you'll find that less disturbing"), I asked him about his friendship with and work for Max Ophuls. "It all started when I was offered the part in *Caught*, and was very doubtful about it, because I couldn't see how we were going to lick the basic problem of the script. The heroine wanted to get a divorce in order to marry me, but at that time you could never show sympathetic characters inclining towards divorce. They had to be driven to it, in spite of themselves, by appalling and extraordinary circumstances, and this pushed all divorce stories too far over into melodrama. They then told me that the film would be directed by Ophuls, this new German genius who had directed *Liebelei*, and as that was one of my favourite films I accepted at once. He was a dear man, and an absolute genius of theatrical effect . . ."

Wasn't it for Ophuls that Mr. Mason was supposed to star with Garbo in *La Duchesse de Langeais*, a project which had supposedly fallen through for lack of finance? "That's a long

and complicated story. Garbo kept planning returns to the cinema in weird parts that no one would hear of—once, I believe, it was as a male clown in a circus—but finally she was sold on the idea of *La Duchesse de Langeais* by Anna Sten's husband, who exerted a powerful influence on her when she was on the West Coast. I always thought it was rather a silly book, with a denouement very feebly motivated for dramatic purposes, but Max was keen on the idea, and I said yes. But when Max, Wanger and Garbo set off for Italy to set up the picture I held out, backed by my agent, for a definite contract for a fully financed, properly scripted film. Apparently Garbo insisted on complete incognito, while staying at the largest and most obtrusive hotel, having her very large and obtrusive car drive 'unobtrusively' to the back door, and then appearing wearing her extraordinary and unmistakable hats and dark glasses. And she didn't see the potential financiers for weeks and weeks, then finally received them in a darkened suite with all the blinds down, where they couldn't see her, only to dismiss them after half an hour. So they got fed up, withdrew their finance, and the film was never made. A pity in a way, I suppose. Of course, when you look at Garbo's old films you realise that she was never really a very good actress, but that extraordinary ambiguous personality, like nothing else on film, except, in a strange way, that of Marilyn Monroe; something of a feeling that the film is their dream which we are somehow allowed to enter."

We talked of other films, other directors. Of Andrew Stone: "The only thing I have against Andy, as I've frequently told him, is that he will not let action speak for itself. He'll show you, say, something going wrong in the engine-room. Then he'll have someone say 'There's something wrong in the engine-room!' and then, just in case you haven't got the idea, have someone else say 'That sounds ominous!' I used to try to get round him by suggesting that this or that of my lines wasn't necessary, but all he ever did was to say amiably 'All right, Jim, if you don't want to say that line, I'll give it to



JAMES MASON IN RICHARD BROOKS' "LORD JIM".

Fred; I think that should be all right.' I later found out that this is his way of dealing with temperamental actresses, so I suppose that's put me in my place."

Of *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*: "I saw *Pandora* again recently and it's just like a series of beautiful stills, with no sort of impetus at all. Still, you know, it's the one film of mine that absolutely everyone seems to have seen; even in Hong Kong on location for *Lord Jim* people kept coming up to me and saying 'Of course, the film of yours I always remember is *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*.' Very odd."

Of Stanley Kubrick: "I've known and admired him for years, but I think the months he spent with Marlon Brando preparing *One-Eyed Jacks* were the real turning point in his career. Up to then I had always thought of him as a brilliant story man who wasn't necessarily too good on directing actors; but I think that through Brando he learned from Kazan, and since then he has a rounded talent as remarkable as any in the American film today."

Mr. Mason's own plans now include a new *Jane Eyre* which he himself will direct: "I believe I could direct; though I am a strong believer in actor's discipline, and would not dream of telling a director his business, it does every so often occur to me that I know more about films and film-making than some of the directors I am working with. And anyway, as a director I might have twenty or more years ahead of me, while I'm not as young as I was and I suppose do not have many years left as a screen actor of any prominence." His philosophy was learnt in a good school: as he hurried back to finish dying he quoted to me a remark of Preston Sturges' which might sum up his career: "Well, Jim, you don't want to get too bothered about things. Films are like a game of golf; you want them to be all fairway, but the interest of the thing lies in the sandtraps."

* * *

I AM ALWAYS FASCINATED by the uncredited work of interesting directors: not, generally, that it really signifies anything very much, but there is considerable satisfaction to be drawn from recognising, or kidding oneself that one recognises, the hand of a favourite director in some otherwise unremarkable film. Antonioni is an interesting case in point: rumours have been going round for a long time about his connection with *Tempest*, on which he is variously reported to have been second-unit director in Yugoslavia or to have taken over direction for a while when Lattuada was ill. There is no mention of him in the "Collana Cinematografica" book on the film, and the Laurentiis organisation are evasive, saying simply that it is up to Antonioni to reveal, if he wishes, the extent of his participation—which, perhaps merely because he never answers letters, he has up to now refrained from doing. More certain, though, is his collaboration on *Nel Segno di Roma* (*Sign of the Gladiator*), an epic of unusual silliness with Anita Ekberg and Georges Marchal. I first came across the information in the Riccardo Freda number of *Présence du Cinéma*, in which Freda explains that though the film was credited to Brignone, in fact Brignone was taken ill before he could begin it and died shortly afterwards, and that he and Antonioni lent a hand by dividing its direction between them. Freda directed the major exteriors and Antonioni the rest, including all the interiors.

Here, I must confess, any instinct I might have for spotting styles had not served me well; I saw the film when it first appeared in 1960 and saw nothing remarkable about it—indeed, quite the reverse. Had I been wrong? Would the extra knowledge permit me to recognise unmistakably, if belatedly, the handiwork of two unarguable auteurs? As luck would have it, the film happened to be showing that week at Camberwell, so off I took myself on a cross-country trek to revaluation. But, alas, I'm afraid my first instinct was right. In the admittedly truncated version offered over here there is nothing worthy of note in the *mise en scène* at all, and I would defy



ANGLO-ITALIAN HORROR: HAMPTON/FREDA'S "THE SPECTRE".

anyone to guess that the film was not entirely the work of its nominal creator, never exactly the most thrilling of Italian directors. There is only one thing which is peculiar: even in these unlikely circumstances Antonioni cannot resist one familiar quirk of his own. In all the interior scenes the characters are disposed with almost obsessive consistency back to back or side by side or indeed practically any way except actually facing each other. To express alienation, as they say? Well, hardly, but at least it makes an amusing change, especially when those emoting thus obliquely are Anita Ekberg, Chelo Alonso, Gino Cervi and others of that ilk.

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MENTION OF THE UBIQUITOUS Signor Freda reminds me of the spate of Italian films with fictionally Anglo-Saxon credits which have been appearing over here of late. In the same *Présence du Cinéma* interview he explains how it all started with his irritation at hearing some Italians, looking at the poster for his *I Vampiri*, say "No point in going to see that: it's Italian." So he decided to get round this prejudice by making his next film in horror or science-fiction style look as much like a British or American film as possible, even to adopting a pseudonym himself and making all his actors and crew appear on the credits strangely transformed into Anglo-Saxon. The result was a series of films by "Robert Hampton," starting with *Caltiki* and including also two which have turned up here recently, *The Terror of Doctor Hichcock* and *The Spectre*. The credits of these offer some rare delights: who would think, for instance, that "Lou D. Kelly" could actually be called Livio Maffei, or that the producer, "Louis Mann" is in fact Luigi Carpentieri and Ermanno Donati? But the most pleasingly fanciful is the art director, Franco Fumagalli, who becomes with fetching literalness "Frank Smokecocks".

This simple translation has been effected since by a number of other directors and technicians: Antonio Margheriti, for instance, first anglicised himself as "Anthony Daisies," and only later, for *Rome in Flames* and *Castle of Terror*, substituted the rather more plausible "Anthony Dawson". Mario Bava,

(Continued on page 153).



"THE SILENCE": GUNNEL LINDBLOM AND BIRGER MALMSTEN.

FILM REVIEWS

THE SILENCE

BERGMAN'S FILM FORCES US to admit once more what an insidious enemy censorship is. Censorship sets up a distorting chamber of reflecting mirrors. The pornographers are titillated by an atmosphere of prohibition; the liberal-minded intellectuals hurry to assert their emancipated attitudes towards the sex in the film. The trouble with all this conditioned manoeuvring is that it fatally unbalances a direct response to Bergman's film. For the censorship controversy about *The Silence* (Gala) naturally tends to stress its naturalistic happenings, to sever its sexual episodes from any more complex artistic universe.

Of course there have been the obligatory recognitions that *The Silence* is the third film of a trilogy dealing not only with love but also with God, and vague dutiful asides have been uttered about Bergman's picture of "a godless universe". But in this reduction to a naturalistic level, a whole dimension has been lost. Vague references to Bergman's "godless world" won't do: they insult his precision as an artist. *The Silence* is a superbly controlled fable, and like all good fables, it communicates precise meanings on several planes beyond naturalism. *The Silence* is the silence of God; its role in the film is not to provide an enveloping romantic wasteland, against which the "real thing"—involved human gestures of sex and humiliation—may take place. God's silence, and the consequences of His absence, infect every human act in Bergman's tale.

The first thing we experience in the film is a magnified sound of ticking. After the credits, the first sequence—in the train compartment—places before us all the elements of the fable: Johan the boy,

fragile and reserved, overripe Anna perspiring profusely, Ester tense and sick, and a surrounding strangeness expressed in incomprehensible foreign notices and voices. Bergman draws us into his world with long uninterrupted takes and unforgettable images—sun setting behind a Max Ernst-like hill range, hard blurred shapes of tanks whipping past the windows. A calculated perfection of film elements is characteristic of Bergman's art; this sequence is one of his most astonishing achievements.

The story of the film is by now familiar: Anna's revolt against Ester, her defiant love-making with a café barman, the worsening disease and increasing isolation of Ester, Johan's wandering through the hotel corridors, the strange old valet who helps and serves and is kind. With such a strong static situation the film becomes a deepening study of the relationships between these characters in their highly selective world. Within this rhythm of gradual revelation, the tiniest details reverberate with meaning. What I am trying to communicate is the way Anna's incessant washing set against Ester's heartrending chokes, gulps and spasms defines a relationship and difference between the two women; the way a cut from the rounded curve of Anna's breast settling into cool white pillows to Ester's burning cigarette makes us feel the abyss between two kinds of existence; the whole delicate poised rhythm and pattern that gives occurrences resonance and enables them to echo with a range of almost imperceptible harmonics.

The first appearance of the old valet, for example, belongs on a naturalistic plane: but a combination of editing and the heightened quality of Håkan Jahnberg's performance makes his next intervention—soothing Ester after she has masturbated and thrashed about in helpless solitary fury—more than naturalistic. When the valet carries out the soiled and rumpled bed-clothes, the effect is already more resonant. We feel, like Ester, that this benign old man is forgiving her, taking away an old leaf, offering a temporary salvation. He is a father to her at this moment, perhaps something momentarily in the place of God. This impression can be carried through into his scenes with the boy. He makes kindly approaches to Johan, offers him food and a present of post-cards. The cards show his mother's funeral: he is bequeathing death to the boy, and the boy hides the cards under the carpet and doesn't respond to the old man. This relationship is vivid and profound, on both a naturalistic and an allegorical level.

God—the real God—is nowhere else in this film. The closest we come to His presence is in Anna's speech describing her love-making in the dark corner of a church: the irony is astringent. God's role mingles imperceptibly with Father's: Anna complains that Ester's hold over her in the past was often due to a threat to reveal her escapades to Father, and the equation is made more explicit in one of the film's key scenes, when Ester confronts Anna and her foreign barman lover in their bed. "I hate you because you make everything so important!" Anna cries, "I'm fed up with your principles. When Father died, you said you didn't want to go on living. Why are you still living then?" Ester continues the moral judgment inherited from Father. Anna has rejected it, and follows only the impulses of her strong healthy body.

But Father is dead, as Ester recalls on what she thinks is her own deathbed. She makes what she calls her "confession before extreme unction." Placing her hand on the valet's head, she puts her fear and hate of sex, of "male glands" and "horrible forces", she wipes the sweat off her breasts and over her lips, and cries out her anguish, the division in her nature. Then, in one of the film's most humbling moments, Bergman shows us fear on the threshold of death. A sound like departing ships' sirens looms loud and Ester twists and gasps in a panic of suffocation. Terrified, she finally draws the sheet over her face, as if to get it all over with once and for all, to make a true winding-sheet at last. It is a naive and tremendous gesture, and it is witnessed by the old valet, who has just been identified as the owner of the watch whose constant ticking at the beginning and turning points of the film has been the only sound effect without a naturalistic basis. It is difficult not to believe that on this deeper, more intangible level, the old man is not meant to stand in place of God—a slightly absurd, fragile and temporary next-best.

This is just one of the currents of meaning that emerge if we forget the hullabaloo about the possible obscenity of the film and attend to the articulations of the fable. There is no space to expand this in detail, but if it holds true, then the foreign language Ester learns from the valet becomes something like the Word, the new holy scripture; and she bequeaths to Johan the possible beginnings of a new tongue, a new life.

Bergman's successes are considerable—his hypnotic creation of a foreign town, claustrophobic and full of worried men in dark

glasses, the sense of unlocalised menace he achieves with the tank in the street and the swooping jets, and above all his direction of actresses. Gunnell Lindblom as Anna is like a thunderstorm constantly about to break; Ingrid Thulin as Ester makes suffocation spiritually articulate. Bergman's failures occur when he dips into areas that remain private, and produces images that are not quickened into life by the force of his story. The dwarfs who play with Johan *could* certainly be seen as the progeny of Anna's kind of compulsive lust, and when they dress up Johan as a little girl this *could* be an image of disorder in the world of sex. But their appearances in the film remain inert, as does the omnipresent man driving a cart full of old furniture through the streets. Conversely, the tank that rolls into the square and stops outside the hotel seemed to me to succeed in creating a deafening counterpoise and threat to the silence and void of God at the centre of the film. And there is one rationally inexplicable image which stunned and haunted me: Anna, taking a break from her lover, looks out of the window. Through a basement grating she sees men in white overalls pouring away slops and rolling barrels. It's like something from one of Dante's circles of Hell.

MICHAEL KUSTOW

LE FEU FOLLET

CURIOUS HOW WE ARE infected by *la politique des auteurs* even in spite of ourselves. No one denies that Louis Malle is one of the most accomplished of the directors thrown up by that old New Wave, or that several of his films remain among the best of their respective types during the last few years. Of course *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* was a brilliantly effective thriller; naturally everyone approved of *Les Amants* as a super-elegant love story with a revelatory performance from Jeanne Moreau; *Zazie dans le Métro* was by far the best of a rather tiresome group of semi-satirical, semi-surrealist French comedies; even the ill-fated *Vie Privée* was undeniably, as they say, interesting. Yet, in spite of all this, Malle has never quite taken his place among the acknowledged leaders of the new French cinema; and the reason seems to be entirely that, good though we think each individual film to be, we are not altogether certain that there is any necessary connection between them. He may, we think, be "just" a superlative craftsman (not that the quality is really common enough to justify the implied denigration), with excellent taste and judgment but no personal vision of the world. And if that is true, of course, he is not an *auteur*, but merely a second-class citizen of the cinema.

Perhaps this is so, but the position has become increasingly difficult to maintain after *Le Feu Follet* (Gala), simply because it is so good. Consequently a number of French critics who had previously had doubts about Malle have now come round, arguing that since the best films are the work of *auteurs*, a director who makes one of them must necessarily be an *auteur*, and then working back to a redefinition of his previous films and status. Fortunately, whether this sort of juggling with terms means anything need not concern us; *Le Feu Follet* is another outstandingly interesting, outstandingly intelligent, outstandingly stylish film from Malle, and its implications beyond that fact are entirely supposititious.

It is an adaptation, by Malle himself, of a short novel by Pierre Drieu la Rochelle, originally published in 1931, recounting the last twenty-four hours in the life of an ex-playboy at the end of his tether. The adaptation preserves very carefully the literary tone of the original narrative, placing it, as it were, by beginning with the first few sentences of the novel spoken on the soundtrack. Thereafter it follows the novel to about the halfway mark with a meticulous accuracy (save in one or two details, like suppressing the obsessive financial preoccupations of Alain, the central character, presumably to remove any possible confusion from our minds about the existential nature of his agony) which recalls more than anything else *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*. Clearly it is not for nothing that Malle was once Bresson's assistant. For the long and rather tiresome conversation of a circle of Alain's drug-taking cronies in the middle of the novel (rendered less relevant anyway by the change of Alain's immediate trouble from drugs to drink), Malle substitutes a shorter, sharper scene (piecing together nearly all its dialogue from the original, however), with Jeanne Moreau as the only understanding and wholly sympathetic figure Alain

meets during the day, and then goes back to the book for the dinner party, the return to the rest-home and Alain's suicide there.

Clearly the novel is a book Malle loves and respects, and has determined to remain absolutely true to. The most likely objection to his film, consequently, is that it is too literary to be cinematic; but that particular objection on principle is one that Bresson especially has helped us to escape from: what more literary, after all, than *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne* and *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, and yet what more cinematic? But the practical applications of any new principles we might adduce from his work remain problematical, since after all not everyone is enough of a Bresson to manage Bresson's *écriture*. Malle has not always seemed in the past to command quite the sort of rigour and self-discipline required, but here he triumphantly demonstrates them. It is seriously possible to debate which is the finer work, the novel or the film, and to come out in favour of the film. For if the novel inevitably has the advantage at the outset, in that it can quite simply tell us much more about Alain's background and mentality, as soon as he starts out on his round of farewells the film gains enormously by its concreteness and precision, bringing into sharp focus things which remain ill-defined in the book, framing the action in such a way as to complete the transformation begun by Drieu of an actual happening (the novel is an imaginative reconstruction of the last hours of a friend who actually did commit suicide in similar circumstances) into a rounded work of art.

Technically, as usual with Malle, the film is absolutely impeccable: it was evident from the first that he had little or nothing to learn about the sheer craft of film-making. In *Le Feu Follet* everything is subordinated to portraying Alain and his dilemma as directly and graphically as possible. Technique never obtrudes, though if one stops to examine the film closely there is evidence of a remarkable technical virtuosity at work. The spare, cool black-and-white photography of Ghislain Cloquet fulfils its function so aptly that its artfulness is scarcely apparent for most of the film, as the camera returns again and again to the figure of Alain, the face of Maurice Ronet, pursuing him untiringly up each of the blind alleys he explores in his search, despairing from the outset, for a way to go on living. It is finally a tribute to Malle that what one carries away from the film is hardly a consciousness of the film itself, but the character of Alain, superbly embodied by Maurice Ronet, and the faces of a few of the people whose lives briefly impinge on his, particularly of course Jeanne Moreau's. The film has become finally a sort of transparent envelope through which we look at the people inside, unconscious for the most part of the art which has gone into designing the container for this very purpose. It is curious, though not by any means a case unique in the arts, that Malle, by thus striving with all possible dedication to lose himself in his work, has ended up only by finding himself more completely than ever before.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR



"LE FEU FOLLET": MAURICE RONET.

NIGHT MUST FALL

NIGHT MUST FALL (M-G-M) IS A MESS, no doubt about that; but rather than catalogue its mistakes, it might be more useful to try to see what Karel Reisz was up to. Point one, obviously, is that in choosing to film Emyln Williams's barnstorming melodrama about a psychopathic killer who carries his victims' heads around in a hatbox and inveigles himself into the good graces of an old lady and her daughter in a lonely cottage, Reisz was making a deliberate breakaway from *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and social realism. Point two, equally obviously, is that although the original play is foolproof on its own level, very little of its thriller-suspense comes over in the film, so one must assume that Reisz was out for more than that.

Clive Exton's script, largely dispensing with the old suspense motif in favour of character and atmosphere, provides a carload of morbid symptoms, allows for a fine range of sexual fun and games, and is evidently an attempt to "get inside" the minds of both murderer and victim. Much of the detail is exact and arresting—Danny's horrifying little ritual dance round the hatbox, for instance, which ends with him opening it in front of a mirror and muttering a bashful "Hello!" to the contents. But the film remains a series of disconnected fragments, unconvincingly and flatly strung together. That there was meant to be something more is indicated by the last sequence, in which Olivia (Susan Hampshire) returns to the house to discover the mutilated corpse of her mother (Mona Washbourne), has a moment of panic, then telephones the police and goes upstairs to confront Danny (Albert Finney). Foolish girl, one thinks, but the killer cowers inexplicably behind the washbasin: reading the synopsis afterwards, one learns that "There is an unexpected strength in her now as she confronts Danny with his deed. And he, faced by the reality of her firm presence, becomes powerless..."

Here one is in Antonioni country (one may recall, perhaps, the subtle, elliptical way in which Claudia gains her moral ascendancy over Sandro in *L'Avventura*). Right from the beginning of *Night Must Fall*—Olivia dreaming on a motionless swing in the hot summer morning, the camera tracking through the quiet trees, the sudden cry of a bird, the quick zoom in to a clearing where Danny hacks savagely with an axe at his latest victim—there is an evident attempt to evoke characters in terms of their surroundings, which eventually gets bogged down in overstatement and preoccupation with narrative. For instance when Olivia, the sleeping princess aroused by a turbulent love affair, realises the truth about Danny, Reisz has her weeping in a cinema to the accompaniment of cries, groans and explosions from a war film; and the final sequence, cross-cutting between Olivia desperately mending a punctured tyre while Danny, back at the house, hunts her mother with a meat-axe, owes more to D. W. Griffith montage and Emyln Williams's narrative than to Antonioni.

Nevertheless, it seems that Reisz—like Godard and Truffaut before him—has chosen hackneyed thriller material simply as a starting point for a personal vision. And there are numerous hints in *Night Must Fall* that he has been radically influenced by the new cinema in general, and by Godard in particular. Like *A Bout de Souffle*, each sequence in *Night Must Fall* has its beginning and end lopped off, giving a choppy, staccato rhythm; and as in *Vivre sa Vie* there seems to be a Brechtian influence in the constant attempts at distanciation (with Danny in particular: his rapid shifts of mood are not entirely accounted for either by his madness or by his chameleon habit of adapting his personality to suit that of his interlocutor). Reisz distantiates—or attempts to—by making sharp cuts: for instance, from Danny in a pathological rage with Olivia after he has found her searching his room, to him happily encouraging her as she learns to ride his scooter on the lawn.

One can only applaud Reisz's courage in making such a complete breakaway—more so than anyone else—from the brand of social realism which has ended by strangling the British cinema, and regret that his leap into darkness only landed him in a quagmire. The thing is, if you are going to bring off an *A Bout de Souffle* or a *Tirez sur le Pianiste*, "il faut le penser jusqu'au bout": but the thinking behind *Night Must Fall* frequently seems to stop well before the end. Too much of the conventional thriller remains, forcing one to ask awkward questions which should be irrelevant: why does the police search through a smallish wood apparently last for several days? Why are the police dragging the lake in search of the murder weapon at night?

At the same time, if you are going to attempt this sort of non-narrative, evocative cinema, where a hair's-breadth misjudgment may destroy the house of cards, then a precise and exact technique is absolutely essential, whether it is acquired apparently instinctively, as with Truffaut and Godard, or by sheer application, as with John

Frankenheimer. There is no room for the sort of hesitations which beset *Night Must Fall*, where Reisz will often open a scene on a close-up for no apparent reason, and then cut back awkwardly into a medium shot, leaving one with the impression that he has shifted his camera simply to get himself out of a dead end. In *A Bout de Souffle* or *Tirez sur le Pianiste*, a shot is always a pleasure to be revelled in, never a predicament.

Perhaps the fault lies with the system. Since *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), Karel Reisz has made only *Night Must Fall*; since *All Fall Down* (1961), Frankenheimer has made *Bird Man of Alcatraz*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Seven Days in May*. And he knows exactly what he is doing. One learns one's métier by exercising it.

TOM MILNE

HAMLET

SHAKESPEARE NO LONGER belongs to us: he is the greatest national Spoet of a dozen European countries. In France, Gide, in Hungary, Aranyi, in Germany, Schlegel, and in Russia, Pasternak have translated *Hamlet*, and over and above their individual contributions, something of each nation's sensibility (elusive quality) plays across Shakespeare's spectrum. One of the best things in Grigori Kozintsev's film (Lenfilm/Sovexport) is the first appearance of the Ghost. Dusk. A giant figure in glinting armour, his black cloak flaming and fluttering like a turbulent storm-cloud, his face shadowed by a vizor—all these elements seem to call up the worst kind of Beerbohm Tree romanticism. And yet, linked with Shostakovich's deep brass sounds, and the crowning shots of horses neighing and bolting with fear, the Ghost becomes as telling as the Grand Inquisitor. A specifically Russian sensibility instinctively illuminates an area of Shakespeare's play. Where Olivier's Ghost was really romantic, an out-of-focus vaporous apparition, Kozintsev chances his arm and achieves something precise, firm and genuine. Those bolting horses have the true Shakespearean feel of natural order tottering.

Kozintsev's film is full of these illuminations. "Denmark's a prison"—shots of a massive portcullis, a vast drawbridge, guards with muskets, and a harsh iron corset into which Ophelia is strapped as she dresses in black to mourn Polonius. Claudius' court is emphatically *there*—indeed the film spends ten minutes placing the court and the Fortinbras business before the Ghost appears at all. There is a threatening circular council-room in which Claudius' central committee meet to decide on Hamlet's trip to England. No one can be alone in this castle: Hamlet's "O that this too too solid flesh" is spoken "voice over," while we see him picking his way through a crowded room of smiling, posturing courtiers. Ophelia's mad scene takes place in a similarly crowded assembly, and the embarrassment and discomfort it generates are true and apt. The guards just don't know where to look as this pale, high-born girl wanders among them distributing twigs.

Shostakovich's score lifts the film on to a plangent, epic plane. He almost makes you believe that "His cockle hat and his sandal shoon" is really an old Serbian folksong; and the presentation of Ophelia is a good example of director and composer working together. When we first meet her, she is being given a dancing lesson. Shostakovich's music is played on a cembalo, insidiously sweet and tinkling. In Ophelia's madness, her dancing gestures return, and so does this crystal tune, now slightly awry and tragic in its incongruity.

This all goes to indicate that the style of Kozintsev's film is realistic-operatic. All the effects we see underline and deepen the main emotional line of the story. The interpretation—blunt, serious Hamlet versus sophisticated inhuman society—has obviously been deeply thought through, but its execution often surprises us by employing conventions that seem old-fashioned. There is little counterpoint or multiplicity. This seems to be a *Hamlet* (as far as I can judge by tempo and shape alone) that is passionate, but lacks quicksilver.

Thus the obverse of Kozintsev's full-blooded expansiveness is a tendency to overplay certain evocative symbols. After Ophelia's death, for example, there are long shots of a seagull pregnant with meaning. The omnipresent shots of the sea surrounding the castle are impressive in giving the film an overall rhythm, but by the end of the film tend to become a bit inert, and one realises how deft the cinema must be to make its images as potent as those of language. (Conversely, the arid, rifted rocks which enclose Hamlet for "To be or not to be" allow the inner eye full scope.)

Smoktunovski as Hamlet is foursquare, strong, and direct,



"HAMLET": OPHELIA AT HER DANCING LESSON.

though Kozintsev places him too often in Burne-Jones positions for my liking. It's hard to tell, without knowing the language, whether he gets the wit of the part; one suspects not, though he has one delicious gag (almost the only one in the film) where he brings the guards leading him to England to a standstill while he takes off his shoe to remove a stone. Michal Nazwanov is a proud, full-fleshed Claudius; he brings off a great *coup* in the Play scene. Petrified by the enacted murder, he rises from his throne. Suddenly, with immense effort, he forces himself to applaud dutifully before cracking up and rushing out in confusion. Gertrude is dignified and sensuous; Kozintsev has interpolated a scene after her set-to with Hamlet in which she says No to Claudius in the bedchamber. Anastasia Vertinska gives a beautifully judged screen performance as Ophelia, and Polonius (mercifully shorn of "To thine own self, etc.") is sober and muted and respectable. There is a fat, ripe Gravedigger.

One may quibble at some of the excisions ("Now might I do it pat" has gone completely, and Claudius, instead of praying, communes with himself in a mirror), one may find the film's tempo and decor occasionally monolithic, but one forgives a lot for those passages where Kozintsev's imagination catches fire and he sends his figures hurtling across the screen with the true Shakespearean energy. Laertes' irruption into the castle on the news of his father's death brings in his wake what seems like half the population of Denmark. Laertes and his followers range through the castle corridors, he plucks an Excalibur-like sword from a chest, and solemnly offers it up to an altar before bursting in on the court. All this adds up to a real re-creation of the primitive pulse of Elizabethan revenge; and a similar authentic rhythm infects Hamlet's killing of the king—"King!", the word breathed from Laertes' lips, and Hamlet leaps across the room, thrusts his sword in like a javelin, and sends Claudius teetering through the castle, bellowing like a bull to his death. At such moments, and at many other points in this rich film, Kozintsev clutches the real thing.

MICHAEL KUSTOW

NINE DAYS OF ONE YEAR

THE FIRST THING to be said about Mikhail Romm's *Nine Days of One Year* (Sovexportfilm) is that it proves that sheer solidity, always a conspicuous characteristic of Russian film-making, can, in the right hands, still be remarkably exciting. Lacking any stimulus comparable to that of the revolution, contemporary Russian directors generally seem inhibited rather than inspired by their debt to the past, and achieve most when aiming, least pretentiously, at literary adaptations like *The Lady with the Little Dog*. The constructive influence of Eisenstein and Dovzhenko has, in

fact, been more apparent in the French *nouvelle vague* than in anything to come out of Russia in recent years, and *Nine Days of One Year* is therefore an exception of a particularly welcome kind. A solid achievement in quite the good old sense of the phrase, it is also a film in which form and content come together for a purpose; and even if that purpose seems at first glance to be mainly concerned with propaganda (i.e. the glorification of Soviet scientific progress) it has, like the early masterpieces of the Russian cinema, a hard core that is generally applicable and universally true. From Romm, whose reputation today rests largely on his brilliantly cynical adaptation of de Maupassant's *Boule de Suif*, shot silent in 1934, this intimation of something approaching a Russian new wave certainly comes as an intriguing surprise.

The nine days with which the film is concerned are in the life of the physicist Dmitri Gusev (Alexei Batalov), who has twice exposed himself to radiation and who, despite his marriage to the girl he loves, virtually commits suicide by taking a third, unnecessary risk. It is the old story of the man with a consuming ambition beside which he holds everything, even his own life, at a pin's fee; and the film is full of conversational platitudes about the progress of science, the bomb and so forth which, judging by his whole manner of shooting as well as his occasional jabs of humour, Romm may well regard simply as the right kind of small talk for the situation. Certainly, there is nothing to suggest that any of the characters actually expresses the director's point of view; and there is ample evidence to support the view that the characters themselves are much more original than anything they say.

Each of the nine days has a special significance for Gusev, for whom, increasingly, any day matters only in so far as it is devoted to science. For Lelya, the girl scientist who marries him only to discover that, although dying, he does not apparently need her, these particular days are also significant in a very different way. The same spring day that sees him absorbed in the manufacture of neutrons, finds her sadly disillusioned about her usefulness both as a wife and as a physicist; and here, with the help of an exceptionally intelligent performance from Tatyana Lavrova, Romm most noticeably strikes the note of subtle sophistication that puts the film, as far as the Soviet cinema is concerned, in a class of its own.

Looking back to the amusingly shot scene in the restaurant when Lelya and Gusev's best friend Ilya gradually abandon their intention to marry each other rather than announce it to Gusev, and forward to the final hospital scene when Gusev, optimistically preparing for an operation with a minute chance of success, sends Lelya a cheerfully illustrated little note, one is struck by the remarkably cool manner in which Romm handles such potentially sentimental material. There is the same emotional economy about the wedding reception, shot with matter-of-fact gaiety in a room with mirrored ceilings, and the quiet scenes, full of social awareness, in



"NINE DAYS OF ONE YEAR": SMOKTUNOVSKI, TATYANA LAVROVA;

which Gusev returns with Lelya to the village where he was born. It is the kind of reticence that exactly expresses the condition of people whose lives are overshadowed by something so much larger than themselves.

Romm's talent is, in fact, an intuitive one, and *Nine Days of One Year*, despite its didactic surface, is not meant to be grasped intellectually. What counts is the visual pattern, the splendidly composed shots and the striking way in which the machines (filmed sometimes in a manner reminiscent of Dovzhenko's *Ivan*) effectively dwarf the human beings who created them. Romm's characters, although firmly established as individuals in their own right, are always seen as inseparable from the ordered environment in which they move. Alexei Batalov gives a beautifully self-effacing performance as the unromantic twentieth century hero, and Innokenti Smoktunovskii's naturalistic Ilya is, within a comparatively limited range, more interesting than the Hamlet the same actor played for Kozintsev. It may be easy to overrate this film; but it is easier still, and much less excusable, to underestimate the very perceptive nature of its success.

ELIZABETH SUSSEX

In Brief

SEANCE ON A WET AFTERNOON (*Rank*) turns a tall story into an uncommonly entertaining melodrama. Masquerading as domestic tragedy—and Kim Stanley's performance almost succeeds in lifting it to that level—the picture is in fact a diligent and occasionally imaginative thriller about obsession. A middle-aged medium, Myra Savage, broods in her stuffy Victorian mansion over the stillborn child who has grown to boyhood in her mind and whom she employs as a familiar during her weekly séances. In her slightly more rational moments she conceives a daring plan whereby her sadly passive husband, Billy, will kidnap a rich little girl and hold her to ransom until the case has been given up as hopeless. Such is Myra's determination and passion for detail that the crazy scheme progresses to the point where she can come forward, demonstrate her extra-sensory powers, and restore both child and ransom money to the grief-stricken parents. By now, however, the little girl has become for Myra the "playmate" of her ghostly son, and therefore cannot conceivably be returned alive. The climax, on the face of it one of those foolproof, actressy retreats into total insanity which never quite seem to work except in old Bette Davis or Ida Lupino movies, succeeds to an extent that nobody unfamiliar with Kim Stanley's Method-charged battery of neurotic insights could possibly have predicted.

The many, often minutely observed details of Miss Stanley's performance are as arresting as the whole psychopathic conception. Almost impeccably English in tone and accent, her talent for sarcasm, barely checked anger, wheedling domination and bland wrong-headedness has a peculiarly American flavour, straight from the heart of the Lillian Hellman country. Even Myra's hair-brushing, her starchy flicking of a nurse's thermometer, her costume changes (flat sandals, slit skirt and low neck for communing with the dead) are calculated to fascinate to the *n*th degree.

So is the film, though not always so unflinching. Bryan Forbes, who directs as well as taking credit for the sharp and bristling dialogue, has been only moderately ruthless in cutting down the kind of technical dead-wood (shock cuts in particular) which spoils so many British movies. And since there are comparatively few such vulgarities here (notably one specious tilted camera-angle at the start of a woodland scene) one can only regret their presence all the more. Otherwise the exteriors are intriguingly bizarre, especially Billy's kidnapping trip to a disused dog-racing track, with a nice use of Hitchcock-brand sound when the child utters bird-like screams in the back-seat prison of her Rolls Royce. Best of all is the lengthy business of the ransom delivery, cunningly shot with a concealed camera in the streets and Tube stations around Piccadilly and Leicester Square.

Yet there are, no use denying, some absolutely incredible elements in the narrative. Billy's more or less complete acquiescence throughout most of the film is one of them. Another is the child's failure to recognise Billy (albeit he is masked like a doctor) as her kidnapper. On the other hand, one is swept along pleasantly enough by the extreme plot manoeuvre which calls for Myra to hold a séance, in the mother's presence, next door to the room in which the restless child is not only held captive but is running a temperature and liable to yell out into the bargain. In the same way it is possible to enjoy the muted ambiguity of the opening for its mystery, as well as the sinister (or at any rate surprising) affirmation of spiritualist belief from Patrick Magee's gimlet-eyed police inspector—if only because it focuses attention even more strictly on Myra's final breakdown. The best things in the film are like this last scene, pure and quiet, sickly and chill, with Richard Attenborough's sympathetic performance as poor, asthmatic, beak-nosed Billy providing an invaluable self-effacing counterpoint to Miss Stanley's display of psychotic frissons.—PETER JOHN DYER

GIRL WITH GREEN EYES (*United Artists*). Irish charm can be slippery and treacherous, but Edna O'Brien, who has compressed her own novel into a witty screenplay, moves with the sure foot of the native. Her heroine, Kate, a young country girl, away from her Catholic family for the first time and tasting city freedom with a shocked delight, is surely a memory of her own Irish girlhood, just as the married man with whom Kate falls in love is a composite figure of all the qualities an inexperienced girl dreams about. Eugene Gaillard—the very name is a romantic fantasy—is mature, sophisticated, considerate, and a writer. (In the book he was a film director!) Peter Finch succeeds very cleverly in embodying the virtues Kate sees in Eugene while at the same time portraying the flesh and blood man, who is lonely and listless, fascinated by Kate's innocence but quickly bored by her gaucherie and irritated by her possessiveness. Not an unkind man, but a realist who has long understood the transitoriness of emotion. It is this sense of inevitable heartbreak that gives the film its underlying seriousness. Kate's fierce determination to seize her happiness and hold on is doomed from the start, but her struggles are funny as well as sad, sometimes farcical in fact, as the tragedies of the very young often are. Even such commonplace attempts at sophistication as the smoking of a cigarette end in humiliation when the burning weed slips down her corsage and is doused by a nicely aimed jug of cold milk. But Kate is resilient, and in the little epilogue which brings the film to a slightly abrupt close, she is seen finding new friends and interests in London. Already her experience with Eugene has become part of the process of growing up.

The relationship between these two is, of course, the central thread of the film, but it is closely woven into an amusing appraisal of the Irish scene, which never sinks to cynicism and bitterness or takes the obvious way to a cheap joke. The dialogue has an uninhibited richness which perfectly catches the cadence of modern Dublin in little exchanges such as those between Kate's employer and her customers in the grocer's shop. Kate and her best friend Baba are neatly contrasted types of convent-bred adolescents. Kate, played by Rita Tushingham with wide-eyed sensitivity, is a serious-minded girl with a tender conscience. Her repressive upbringing makes it impossible for her to surrender to Eugene at first, much as

she wants to, and these bedroom scenes are treated with admirable delicacy. Baba, on the other hand, would never have hesitated. With her, one feels, the nuns have been wasting their time. A slap-happy, mildly sluttish young woman, all brash confidence and ignorant bounce, she is vividly brought to life by Lynn Redgrave in a debut of startling brilliance.

This is a first film too for the director, Desmond Davis, and it is a good start. His restless camera is too much given to would-be lyrical excesses, but in an ex-camera operator this is a forgivable fault, especially since he worked on three films with Tony Richardson. If he can absorb the influence of Richardson and other contemporary directors into a coherent style of his own, his next film will be even more interesting. Meanwhile he has shown a sympathy blessedly free of sociological obsessions, a talent for memorable but unselfconscious location photography and a tactful touch with actors. It is enough to be going on with.—BRENDA DAVIES

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT (Fox). What was it that made Eugene O'Neill a great playwright? Not (as Mary McCarthy has pointed out) a gift for language: his dialogue is clumsy, repetitive, inexpressive. Nor such self-conscious, heavy-handed experiments with technique as the use of masks in *The Great God Brown*, the spoken stream-of-consciousness in *Strange Interlude*, the inordinate length of *Mourning Becomes Electra*. As a writer he was undistinguished and pretentious, but as a dramatist he was magnificent. His passionate concern for human beings, the pity and anger which their frustrations aroused in him, transcend the literary limitations of his plays when they are performed, and speak directly to the audience in the mysterious language of the theatre. This is particularly true of the autobiographical tragedy *Long Day's Journey into Night*, his finest work. An exhaustive series of confessions, almost monotonous in its revelation of disillusion and degradation, it is a great play in spite of itself. And, in spite of itself, the film adaptation is a good film; and remains so even in the version distributed here, which is some forty minutes shorter than the American original.

Sidney Lumet has transposed it straight, maintaining the unities of time (twenty-four hours) and place (the shabby-genteel home of the Tyrone family). He has approached the original with respect, even reverence, and the original is of sufficient quality to justify his treatment. While mother, father and two sons—desperately dependent, united by a resentment that turns love into hate—tear at each other's sensibilities and expose pretence after pretence, the steady intensification of emotion is as overpowering in the cinema as it can be on the stage. The film remains theatrical, but in the best sense of that word.

Long Day's Journey provides four tremendous parts for actors, and it would be a rare production in which all were realised with equal success. In the film, Ralph Richardson as the father—a flamboyant Irish actor—and Jason Robards, Jr. as his eldest son—a self-destructive, bitter drunk—are the best. Richardson's mannerisms, which can be fatally distracting, are here absorbed by the histrionic character he portrays; and Robards exactly interprets the tortured, sensual man who despises his own weakness so fiercely that he flaunts it. As the sensitive, tubercular Edmund (the young O'Neill) Dean Stockwell is certainly inadequate, but not disastrously so. Katharine Hepburn is fascinating to watch as the mother, but she is cast so wildly against type that not even this resourceful actress can conceal a basic incongruity. Mary Tyrone should be a simple, convent-bred, shallow, plumply pretty Irish girl who has been tricked by disappointment into drug addiction; and part of the drama of her situation comes from her inability to understand and acknowledge it. Katharine Hepburn suggests a subtle, sophisticated, complex, elegant lady, who might easily take drugs but only in a spirit of intellectual curiosity. Mrs. Tyrone should be the stupidest member of her family, but Katharine Hepburn cannot help playing her as if she were the most intelligent.

FRANCIS WYNDHAM

THE NUTTY PROFESSOR (Paramount). Critics are strange people: once they have placed an artist in his own little slot, nothing he does later can alter his status. Thus, Jerry Lewis is categorised as a face-pulling ape figure and relegated to the last few lines of the column; and this despite the fact that all the films he has directed have displayed an uneven, yet indisputable, flair for cinema. Now, with *The Nutty Professor*, he not only gives his best performance(s) but establishes himself as a director in his own right, capable of sustaining some weird flights of fancy and beating his mentor, Frank Tashlin, on his own ground in matters of timing and tact.



"SEANCE ON A WET AFTERNOON": KIM STANLEY AND CLIENTS.

Metamorphosis is his theme: a crazy version of Jekyll and Hyde with a splendid take-off on all the mumbo jumbo of that story and, at the same time, another variation on Lewis's own split-personality mixture of anarchy and naïve moralising. Under his own direction, Lewis gives himself ample time to develop both his faces, as the myopic, buck-toothed, accident-prone college professor turns himself into the svelte and arrogant pop singer. While the professor provides the main laughs (talking nonchalantly to a non-existent person after his glasses have been removed, or settling awkwardly for an interview in a badly squeaking chair), Lewis reserves a real venom for the singer. And when he makes his final change back to the professor—done neatly and simply by cutting away to Stella Stevens' face between each stage of the metamorphosis—Lewis presents his own simple moral: "people should not pretend to be what they aren't."

In his earlier work, Lewis made a shameless frontal attack on his audience's susceptibilities; now he seems willing to risk a harder characterisation, involving less obvious audience identification and with a more subtle integration of gags with narrative. The attractive colour photography of Wallace Kelley (who shot many of the earlier Lewis/Tashlin pictures) here makes its own witty comment in such scenes as the explosion at the beginning when, in a neat cartoon gag, Lewis is discovered crushed under the flattened laboratory door; or the first nightclub entry, when a prolonged crane shot arouses anticipations of a Hyde monster, but instead introduces the dazzlingly hip pop singer.

In this film, Lewis has attempted a difficult task: he has made a sad comedy. The nutty professor is essentially a forlorn figure, and even his other self has difficulty in keeping up the masquerade, especially when his voice changes into the professor's unromantic croak. For all that, when the film is funny (which is often), it is very funny indeed. One remembers in particular a marvellously orchestrated hangover, with each sound transformed into a unique instrument of torture; a brief calamity in a bowling alley when the professor triumphantly mistakes spectators for skittles; an impromptu table-top rendering of *Hamlet* by the staid Dean, costumed in gown, straw boater and umbrella; or, best of all, the prolonged opening sequence where the professor, after blowing up an entire class of chemistry students, waits apprehensively for the Dean to begin lecturing him, and the silence becomes almost manic, his trail of footprints on the off-white carpet looms threateningly, and a creaking chair begins to sound like the crack of doom. The tacked-on, sloppy ending may be a mistake, but the quality of invention elsewhere makes the critics' verdict seem pretty inexcusable.

JOHN GILLET

WILLIAM S. PECHTER

ON AGEE ON FILM

I. NOT QUITE ON PAPER

AS ONE OF THE BOOK REVIEWS put it, James Agee, for a number of years, has had an underground reputation as America's best film critic. The phrase may be slightly redundant—after all, what but an underground considers such reputations worth establishing?—and the sense of an underground tends to go a little fuzzy when one finds it includes the *Harper's* book editor and the man from the Saturday Review Syndicate. But one can hardly blame Agee for this; he is no longer free to choose his company. How we love our dead artists!—indeed, we like them better that way. Scott Fitzgerald, Dylan Thomas, Charlie Parker: these are our cultural folk heroes, deities of self-destruction and defeat. And so it satisfies our morbid sentimentality to award posthumous prizes to those we hardly knew when they were alive, hoping always that next year we may again be so lucky.

There is something depressing about reading James Agee's collected film criticism,* but it is an effect for which he cannot be held responsible. It is simply that, despite the wit

and intelligence with which Agee deals with them, one is appalled by the staggering number of downright rotten movies one had thought forever forgotten. It is similar, in this respect, to reading *Sights and Spectacles*, and Agee is a good deal more sympathetic and generous toward his subjects than is Mary McCarthy. It arises necessarily that much of his criticism owes its interest to the extent to which it illuminates the mind of the critic rather than the work criticised. After all, movies like *And the Angels Sing*, *Bride by Mistake*, or *Roger Touhy*, *Gangster* have to be less important than what any sensitive and intelligent person can say about them. And so if much of Agee on film is considerably more interesting as an understanding of Agee than of the movies, there are only the movies to blame. He, I am sure, didn't want it that way, and despite the highly subjective tone of his criticism it is, finally, remarkably self-effacing.

Still, a general sense of Agee's basic attitudes toward the medium does emerge from his particular reviews. The movies must work for, and through, the eyes.

"... there is only one rule for movies that I finally care about: that the film interest the eyes, and do its job through the eyes."

* *Agee on Film*, Volume One. McDowell Obolensky, New York. Peter Owen, London.



JEAN SIMMONS AND MICHAEL KEARNEY IN "ALL THE WAY HOME", FROM AGEE'S NOVEL "A DEATH IN THE FAMILY".

"Most movies are made in the evident assumption that the audience is passive and wants to remain passive; every effort is made to do all the work—the seeing, the explaining, the understanding, even the feeling . . . pictures are not acts of seduction or of benign enslavement but of liberation, and they require, of anyone who enjoys them, the responsibilities of liberty. They continually open the eye and require it to work vigorously; and through the eye they awaken curiosity and intelligence. That, by any virile standard, is essential to good entertainment. It is unquestionably essential to good art."

The experience of seeing a movie should appear to be an immediate rather than a reflected one.

"The movie . . . has its chance to be born in front of the camera, whereas the general run of screen plays force what takes place before the camera to be a mere redigestion of a predigestion."

" . . . the two primal requirements of the camera, in whose neglect or dilution you might better not use a camera at all: living—rather than imitative—visual, aural, and psychological authenticity, and the paralysing electric energy of the present tense . . ."

His preference is for the fiction film.

"Nearly all of the most talented people in moving pictures work in fiction, and most of the greatest possibilities lie within fiction."

The most important work in films is likely to be done by amateurs, but must not be amateurish.

" . . . plenty of people realise a point that many others will never understand and that there is no use labouring: some professional experience is exceedingly useful and perhaps indispensable, but most of the best movies could be made on very little money and with little professional experience."

"Though . . . the picture is streaked with . . . amateurishness . . . I am forced more and more to the narrow, dismal hope that if good movies are to be made any more at all . . . they will have to be made on shoestrings, far outside the industry, and very likely by amateurs or at best semi-professionals."

The best possibilities of the medium lie in the use of natural actors in real settings.

"To use non-professionals well . . . is a rare and potentially very important kind of creative faculty, called for by movies . . . as by no other kind of art."

"The Hollywood traditions of acting . . . when there is any pretence whatever of portraying 'real' people . . . are painfully out of place."

"The people in this film . . . do and *are* things, over and over again, which are beyond acting and utterly different from it . . . a blending of reality with imagination . . ."

And, above all, there is an absolute commitment to the thing in itself, to the real, unaltered thing incorporated into an imaginative reality.

"My heart goes out to the people who reproduced the Brooklyn streets—I could probably lose every other interest in life in the love for such detail—but try as they will, they only prove . . . that the best you can do in that way is . . . dead . . . compared with accepting instead the still scarcely imagined difficulties and the enormous advantages of submerging your actors in the real thing, full of its irreducible present tense and its unpredictable proliferations of energy and beauty."

"The films I most eagerly look forward to will not be documentaries but works of pure fiction, played against, and into and in collaboration with unrehearsed and un-invented reality."

* * *

Upon such general commitments was based Agee's performance as a practical critic, but one need not necessarily take issue with them to have some reservations about the practice itself. He had a tendency to re-imagine material which both attracted and disappointed him, and most of his comments on films such as *Lost Angel*, *National Velvet*, *The Human Comedy*, *The Lost Weekend*, and *Farrebique* consist of suggested revisions, often to the point of suggesting



KATHARINE HEPBURN IN HUSTON'S "THE AFRICAN QUEEN". SCRIPT BY AGEE AND OTHERS.

totally different films. Yet, for all that one might argue against this as a valid aspect of criticism, the chief concern of which is with the given, to begin this way is to get nowhere. For, finally, it is impossible wholly to divorce Agee the critic from Agee the would-be film-maker.

More subject to question is his inclination toward a good deal of allusion and comparison to the other arts, which often appears as little more than a meaningless and futile attempt to impart dignity by association. Thus René Clair is compared to Mozart and declared to be "one of the few great artists of this century"; Hitchcock shows "qualities of judgment and perception which . . . bring him abreast of all but the few best writers of his time." In discussing *Farrebique*, he invokes Hesiod, Virgil, Homer and Mozart; *Ivan the Terrible* and *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* both invite comparisons to Shakespeare; *The Story of G.I. Joe* to Whitman, *Man's Hope* to Homer. Some of his imputations of literary devices to movies are a good deal less than clear. What can he mean by the "internal rhyming" of a film like *Desert Victory*? And occasionally his rhetoric goes obscure just when it appears to be most clear and technically exact, as in his observation that the shots in Huston's films are "cantilevered, sprung together in electric arcs, rather than buttered together." Perhaps his most specious tendency is to overestimate the mass audience, and overvalue the virtues of popular art. Thus he believes that "most though not all good films get much of their vitality and resonance by being designed for a broad mixed audience," and claims of a film he likes that it approaches "the global appeal, to the most and least sophisticated members of an audience, which the best poetic drama and nearly all the best movies have in common."

Lionel Trilling has observed, in discussing *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, that: "Agee has a sensibility so precise, so unremitting, that it is sometimes appalling; and though

nothing can be more tiresome than protracted sensibility, Agee never tires us: I think this is because it is brilliantly normal and because it is a moral . . . sensibility." Agee's vocabulary as a critic is throughout a distinctly moral one. Writing as he did during the war years, he grew intensely concerned with the moral consequences of war films both to brutalise and degrade the audience by allowing it, "at an incurable distance from participation, hopelessly incapable of reactions adequate to the event," to "sit in comfort and watch carnage." Much of his harshest criticism of films derives from what he senses to be their moral blindness, cowardice, evasion, and deceit. And sometimes he slips into some alarmingly theological terminology: a particularly trashy movie derives from an empty "soul" when an empty mind would seem more just, and Chaplin's tramp is the "most nearly complete among the religious figures our time has evolved."

Yet, in a sense, all this only poses rather than answers the question of Agee's merit as a critic. Perhaps as much to his credit as against it was the fact that he was not in the least methodical or systematic. His criticism is discursive and impressionistic, rarely analytical. Except for his three part article on *Monsieur Verdoux*, his longer pieces are simply expanded impressions, rather than tightly organised critical essays. What Agee succeeds in doing, more perfectly than any other film critic I know, is to communicate a sense of the experience of actually seeing the movie. Whether by a ruthless exclusion of literary description or by an attempt to formulate a verbal equivalent, he is capable of conveying, about as well as words can, the sense of the film image.

Of *The Navigator*:

"... a ghostly, unforgettable moment . . . when, on a deserted, softly rolling ship, all the pale doors along a deck swing open as one behind Keaton and, as one, slam shut, in a hair-raising illusion of noise."

Of *Meet Me in St. Louis*:

"... a mother and four daughters, all in festal, cake-frosting white, stroll across their lawn in spring sunlight, so properly photographed that the dresses all but become halations . . ."

Of *The Story of G.I. Joe*:

"The sudden close-up . . . of a soldier's loaded back, coldly intricate with the life-and-death implements of his trade, as he marches away from his dead captain . . ."

Of *Monsieur Verdoux*:

"... some wonderful loose group shots, full of glass, gravel, grey sky, pale heads, and dark clothing, at the garden party . . ."

Of *Man's Hope*:

"The descent of the broken heroes from the desperate stone crown of Spain, as from a Cross, to the maternal valley, a movement so conceived that a whole people and a whole terrain become one sorrowing and triumphal Pietà for twentieth-century man . . ."

Of *We Were Strangers*:

"... what seems to be hundreds of young men and women, all in summery whites, throw themselves flat on the marble stairs in a wavelike motion as graceful as the sudden close swooping of so many doves."

Yet, it remains to be said that at the more vital concern of criticism—that of illumination and discovery—Agee rarely succeeds. He is able brilliantly to communicate the immediate sensation of seeing the film, but only rarely does he enlarge our understanding of it. I refer, of course, to those films he does discuss which leave anything to be understood beyond the sensation of a nearly perfect enervation and ennui. That Agee rarely achieves more than a scattered impression of film images owes less, perhaps, to the critic than to the scrappy, patchwork quality of most of the films he is dealing with, in which the only value, if it exists at all, exists in isolated moments.



"THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER": SHELLEY WINTERS AND ROBERT MITCHUM. SCRIPT BY AGEE.

But while Agee is firm on the grounds of what, visually, makes a successful movie, he is often less secure on those which constitute a finished work of art. The two are, of course, no more the same than fine prose is great literature. And, too often, Agee never goes beyond reviewing at its best into criticism, a distinction I will not make much of here. In his two pieces on *The Story of G.I. Joe* and *Man's Hope*, he suggests what, with sufficiently rigorous organisation, might have been his own, exceptionally valuable approach to the criticism of films. In these pieces he is able to pursue the films' imagery with such systematic intent as to make it demonstrably synonymous with their meaning. His long article on *Monsieur Verdoux*, after a false start, turns into his most sustained performance at the writing of a patiently developed, firmly organised piece of criticism. It is analytical in nature; and unique in that, of those pieces on the films Agee most admires, it relies on no justification in terms of the other arts. Perhaps it is that, of all the films Agee discusses, *Verdoux* alone is so surely a complete and complex work of art as to demand the appreciation of measured essay.

* * *

In *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Agee wrote:

"If I could do it, I'd do no writing at all here. It would be photographs; the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odours, plates of food and excrement . . . A piece of the body torn out by the roots might be more to the point."

In this furious impatience with words and art, he saw in the moving pictures the possibility to go directly to the thing itself, to deal imaginatively with concrete reality. The dialectical tension between what he *could* see as potentiality, and what he *did* see as actuality, informs all of his criticism and gives it its characteristic tone of despair. In another context Agee wrote, "socially . . . the most dangerous form of pride is neither arrogance nor humility, but its mild, common denominator form complacency," and his most characteristic disposition as a film critic was towards a cry of



"THE NIGHT OF THE HUNTER": LILLIAN GISH.

desperation against the mammoth complacency of the industry.

"... you have only to compare the best of last year's films with the best that have been made or in your conception could be made, and the best that have been made with the best work you have known in any other art you choose, to know that those who make or care for moving pictures have great reason to be angry, for all that is frustrated, and still greater reason to be humble, for all that is fallen short of, frustration or no. And if you foresee how few years remain before the grandest prospect for a major popular art since Shakespeare's time dissolves into the ghastly gelatinous nirvana of television, I think you will find the work of this last year or any recent year, and the chance of any sufficiently radical improvement within the tragically short future, enough to shrivel the heart."

In a sense even his wit, at its most characteristic, was a function of his moral despair.

"I could not resist the wish that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer had topped its aquatic climax—a huge pool full of girls, fountains, and spouts of flame—by suddenly draining the tank and ending the show with the entire company writhing like goldfish on a rug. But M-G-M resisted it."

This is not simply devastating—it is *annihilating*, as are his several suggestions that the only effective remedies for bureaucratic complacency were bullets and dynamite.

Agee seemed always aware but never sure of his audience. It is apparent in his criticism that he was motivated by a constant sense of obligation to inform his readers. It comes as something of a shock to come across his occasional reviews of ten, fifteen, or twenty-five movies, all safely forgotten, in a single column. For six years this immensely gifted man was in the movies, suffering for us. And it is saddening to note the number of films he wishes to discuss at further length but never does. For he was constantly in action, reporting on all he could see in the space allotted, and then back for more. There simply wasn't time for the considered, permanent statement, the critical essay. Almost every time Agee mentions a film for the second time it is to revise his opinion of it, and one feels that were he to mention it a third time there would be still a different opinion; indeed, it is a mark of his honesty that this is so.

I am sure that Agee could never have imagined the possibility of his criticism being collected in a single volume under so simple, yet so imposing a title. He wrote for the moment, to direct his audience to films of merit and rouse its anger at every cheap failure. And behind all his criticism, manifested chiefly in his wit, is his own sense of impotence and failure at having declined the role of critic for that of active influence.

"Although, as is perhaps immodest to point out, the whole of the movie world awaits trembling from fortnight to fortnight to learn from this column what should or should not be done next . . ."

Is it peculiarly significant, or just peculiar, that the publishers of his criticism saw fit to use as its foreword the praise of a man whose first admission is, "I do not care for movies very much and I rarely see them . . .?"

II. NOT QUITE ON FILM

PERHAPS THE BEST MEANS of approaching the odd, perplexing volume of five scenarios* which comprises, except for some narration, Agee's writing for the film is by way of a few tangential observations. For one, the fact that John Huston's brief introduction, with its mixture of showbiz-heaven pieties and subtle patronising, constitutes an unpleasant footnote to all that he seems to have come to as a director; that it should serve as the preliminary to the work of a man by whom his talents were once so highly valued is all the more dispiriting. For another, there is the fact of this book as a book, surely an exemplar of casual mismanagement even among books on film, wherein mismanagement clearly is the rule. So we are given five scenarios assembled in such fashion that the first written appears last and the others wander in with no apparent order; so we are not given any source for *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*, although all others are dutifully cited; so we are given an occasional line of screen direction from the mouth of one of the characters. I happen not to think such carelessness as trivial a matter as it is generally inclined to be treated, but this is a point I won't elaborate further here. And then there is the work's oddness itself—how different it is from what, on the basis of Agee's criticism, one might have expected. But to say this is already to find oneself into the midst of it.

All but one of the five screenplays are drawn directly from literary material, and even *Noa Noa*, his ambitious life of Gauguin, has its literary sources; and all of them are much involved in artifice. By this I don't mean fiction, for Agee's preference was avowedly for the fiction film, but rather the scenarios' ubiquitous trappings of exotic locale, historical setting, and colourful costume. It is *Noa Noa*, I would imagine, on which one must base a serious judgment of Agee's contribution to writing for film. Obviously, for his publishers, it is the *pièce de résistance*, heralded by them with intimations of experiment and revolution; and, certainly, releasing Agee for the only time in the collection from the demands of a direct adaptation, it presents him, or should, at his most freely individual. And yet it seems to me, in almost every way, the weakest work in the collection, another working of the clichés of the noble savage with an occasional obeisance toward some more familiarly those of an all-suffering Christ. Of course, it is true that probably no artist's life conforms more neatly to the theme of the noble savage than does Gauguin's; but when truth becomes cliché, why not tactfully avoid it?

The problem inherent in using the artist as hero of a work of art is that of legitimately establishing his genius. If, as in the case of Mann's *Leverkuhn*, the artist is imaginary, one may even have to invent his art; but if your subject happens to be Gauguin, or Van Gogh, one has the plausible

* *Agee on Film*, Volume Two. McDowell Obolensky, New York.



"THE BRIDE COMES TO YELLOW SKY": MARJORIE STEELE AND ROBERT PRESTON. THE STEPHEN CRANE STORY, WITH A CONRAD ADAPTATION, MADE UP THE TWO-PART FILM "FACE TO FACE".

alternative of simply demonstrating what has already been proven. Thus Van Gogh, in *Lust for Life*, is merely Kirk Douglas with problems, *except* for the evidence of those damn, magnificent paintings. And, although *Noa Noa* is considerably more adventurous and daring than *Lust for Life*, it seems to me scarcely more successful than that film in creating, on the basis of internal evidence, the figure of a great artist, or in illuminating the process of creation of his art. Agee's most ambitious attempt to get under the skin of a work in creation—a sequence detailing the painting of "Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?"—seems to me almost painfully futile in its laborious effort to penetrate the inscrutable surface; and, finally, as dazzlingly superficial as Clouzot's film of Picasso painting with light. When Agee's Gauguin most closely resembles an artistic genius, Agee most closely resembles a devoted curator, and his film a gallery hung as for some great retrospective exhibition.

Otherwise, what we have is *The Adventures of Paul Gauguin*, *Artist*: this is the appropriate context for that penultimate sequence in which Gauguin petitions the governor for a restoration of the natives' rights, a righteous, morally uplifting episode composed with great fidelity to the fact and little to the truth of Gauguin's life, as that truth might properly find embodiment in a work of art. If such a sequence derives from some too simple notion of the way in which art imitates life, there seems to be at work elsewhere, in the specifications that the backgrounds at Arles be patterned after Vincent's landscapes, some equally inadequate conception of the idea of life imitating art. Bound up with this confusion is a kind of schoolgirl idealisation of the artist, and his indomitable courage:

METTE: No: you must do what you must. But—*why*, Paul! Painting is all very well, and I want you to be at peace with yourself, but—*why*?

GAUGUIN (*tenderly*): My dear, I'm afraid that's something you'll never understand. And for that, I revere your bravery all the more. We'll be well, I can promise you—so long as we both keep faith with our courage.

This sort of throbbing emotionalism has, I think, little if

anything to offer us of any genuine understanding of either Gauguin or the artistic temperament, in which, I would guess, courage plays a subordinate role to necessity. As an attitude toward the artist as subject, I find even this somewhat naïve reverence immeasurably more likeable than such alternatives as the vulgar sophistication of a *Moulin Rouge*. Yet, if courage and integrity *are* the issues, I only wish Agee had paid heed to the very words he gives, at one point, to Gauguin, in response to the ascription of bravery: "If I were sufficiently brave, I'd have said nothing about it."

* * *

Agee's two adaptations from Stephen Crane seem to me almost entirely successful in the accomplishment of their more modest intentions; yet what a collaboration of opposites: Agee with his disposition toward augmentation, and Crane with his passion for concentration. *The Blue Hotel* is a story in which Crane finally violates his own aesthetic by some supererogatory moralising; Agee goes somewhat further in this direction, and adds a virtuoso death sequence of agitated cutting. *The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky*, in its cameo-like perfection, is perhaps Agee's finest piece of writing for the screen, and a work of genuine charm, that all but vanished and, I think, undervalued quality. It is the kind of charm one finds in a film such as *The Sun Shines Bright*, a work of which Agee's puts me in mind in other ways as well. I have not seen the short film made of his script, but I would guess its single defect might be one of point of view; that, I suspect, of the sophisticated stranger, regarding the newlyweds from a distance and finding them uncommonly quaint. Which is to say the material dangerously skirts, as Ford's film never does, a self-consciousness of its own charm.

It is difficult to say how much of the published version of *The African Queen* is Agee's since, although the publishers maintain a discreet silence on the subject, screen credit for the film was shared by Agee with John Collier and Peter Viertel, as well as with Huston. It was very much its director's film, I believe: a delightful film; also, I think, a rather inconsequential one. The problem with *The Night of the Hunter* is of another nature. Here the script is all Agee's, but the film is to great degree Laughton's, and it is often far from certain where the one leaves off and the other begins. One is at something of a disadvantage in distinguishing the two in having seen Laughton's film before having read Agee's scenario for it; the all but irresistible tendency is to "see" the scenario in the images in which the film realised it.

As a film, *The Night of the Hunter* was a work of such magnificent ambition and intransigence as almost to attain success by virtue of such magnificence alone. But ambition and intransigence are not enough. *The Night of the Hunter* is the kind of work which depends for its very existence on the sustaining of a mood and a style, the style of magic realism; it is as fragile as a fairy tale. Instead, as directed by Laughton, the film is of such a clattering eclecticism as occasionally to resemble a compressed stylistic history of the medium, from flat-lit naturalism to Germanic expressionism, from Griffith lyric to Welles Gothic. Like Welles, one can imagine Laughton having spent a year just seeing movies in preparation for being a director; unlike Welles, instead of then making his own film, he seems rather to have decided to remake everybody else's. Probably, the kind of controlled stylistic unity that such a dreamlike work demands is achieved with less difficulty in literature, in which all events may be estranged from us by a veil of language. To achieve this style of sustained unreality in film one has constantly to resist the camera's natural propensity for the real, the concrete object. I have not read the novel of *The Night of the Hunter*; the film, despite such beautifully realised passages as the flight down the river, is most often groping awkwardly for that fitting style it only intermittently achieves. And

Agee's screenplay seems to be caught in some limbo between the two of them.

* * *

And there it is, that is all: *Agee on Film* complete, and yet unfinished. There was, for me, something extremely difficult and deeply troubling in the experience of reading Agee's screenplays, and I think that something like anguish must have gone into the writing of them. It is a difficulty beyond that merely in the effort of visualisation which every directorial description imposes on the reader, requiring one not only to see the image but to see it in context, as an element of rhythm, contrast, analogy, total effect. I mean rather that troubled sense which one sometimes gets even from Agee's criticism, that sense of watching a man attempting almost feverishly to force words to leap from the page and miraculously transmute themselves into that wondrous entity: the visual image. And, for Agee, whose love for language was second only to his love for the visual image, what suffering there must have been in seeing words lose their own beauty in a mass of necessarily functional description (pan camera ls, etc.) and still not attain that beauty of the state desired.

The publisher's blurb for the scenarios has a tendency to argue that they are actually more perfectly realised than could be any possible film of them, and, in a sense, this is not entirely untrue. The scenarios are as fully detailed as any such work could be; every nuance has been already indicated by the writer, and any director wholly respecting all the scripts' intentions would merely be going through Agee's preordained paces, performing solely as his *alter ego*. The scenarios, as they were written, were also directed . . . directed, and yet not filmed. For the actual, terrible truth is that, complete as they are, these scenarios do not exist at all; they have no more independent existence than an unperformed score of music. A scenario's only proper life is that of film: just as film editing corresponds to the writer's final act of revision, the analogue to the original act of literary creation is filming. Certain sequences in Agee's screenplays seem, on

the basis of their description, quite remarkable, and yet one can only say what they *seem* to be, never what, in fact, they *are*. For much as Eisenstein "proved" on paper unprecedented beauties which he was never able to achieve on film, so what is best in Agee's writing for the screen remains less part of the history of art than that of suggestion, speculation, aspiration, passionate desire, and the ephemera of dreams.

So there it is: Agee on film; six years' notes on the run and five scenarios, three of them filmed, none of them filmed by their author. And hovering about all this activity—one cannot honestly call it achievement—a terrible pathos; the pathos of potentialities unrealised, the pathos of unfulfilment. Indeed, it is the pathos of our movies themselves, or was. For six years, Agee sat in the semi-darkness of movie theatres and bore witness to the dying of a light that had once briefly shown. His criticism is the personal record of a search, and if, along the way, he could be unresponsive to what pleasures might be found in a number of skilful entertainments, I cannot deny the greater worth of his more serious pursuit.

To have read through James Agee's collected criticism when it was first published some six years ago, in America, was to be deeply moved; surely, there is no other criticism of film which can be said, as can Agee's, to impart an *emotional* experience. Reading Agee then, in that dark time of Cinema-Scoped stage plays, and the birth of *Gidget*, and rumours of a revolutionary new wave followed by films like *Les Amants* and *Orfeu Negro*; reading Agee then, with nothing to be seen ahead on that time's bleak horizon; reading *Agee on Film* then, one wished to rise up from it and cry in anger and despair: The art of film is dead!—it's time to reinvent it!

To re-read *Agee on Film* now, in this time of Godard, Antonioni, Truffaut, Satyajit Ray, and with evidence as diverse as *Yojimbo* and *8½*, is to be struck by the remoteness of its feeling from our present situation. To be moved, also, by this, its final, most unfathomable pathos: that Agee did not live to see that dead art being reinvented.

FILM CLIPS

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having figured on the credits of *Caltiki* (in his old photographer days) as "John Foam", changed for *La Frustra e il Corpo* to "John M. Old"—a little surprisingly, seeing that in the meantime he had made a reputation under his own name with precisely this type of film. Others to join the rush for pseudonymous naturalisation are Alberto De Martino, who seems to follow the Freda pattern of directing spectacle under his own name and horror (in this case literally *Horror*) as "Martin Herbert", and Antonio Boccaci, maker of *Metempsycyco*, who has taken the name of "Anthony Kristye", perhaps in obscure tribute to Agatha. All very curious; one wonders whether in exchange for this rash of new "British" directors we cannot offer some of our own. If they were fitted out with resounding Italian names we might even come in time to think their own brand of horror was nearly as good.

* * *

MY RESEARCHES LAST QUARTER into Continental films which have never turned up in Britain set me thinking. It's surprising, when you come to consider the matter, how many English-speaking films seem also to have disappeared without trace. Sometimes years go by before they pop up again: witness the recent double bill consisting of *From the Earth to the Moon* and *Enchanted Island*, both Benedict Bogaeus productions going right back to R.K.O. days (ah, the excitement of seeing an R.K.O. copyright on *King Kong vs Godzilla*, after all these years!). Some, of course, never turn up at all, and with others there are unaccountable delays: *The Nutty Professor*, for

instance, appeared only a month or so ago, after nearly a year on the shelves. We need not go again through the British Lion titles still hidden away somewhere, but I do find myself wondering what has happened to a couple of British films: what, for example, ever became of Brian Desmond Hurst's version of *The Playboy of the Western World* with Siobhan McKenna, which did at last come out in America last year but has never arrived here? Or that film Anthony Asquith made in Sweden some three years ago, *Two Living, One Dead*, with, as I recollect, Bill Travers and Virginia McKenna? Then there are lots of American films. Some of them, I suppose, like Samuel Fuller's *Shock Corridor* and Denis Sanders' *Shock Treatment*, have run into censorship trouble, but what about *Borderlines*, alias *The Caretakers*? That, surely, was not particularly sensational in its treatment of mental illness? Joan Crawford's latest, *Straitjacket*, is still sufficiently recent to raise no question, but what about William Castle's previous efforts, *Mr. Sardonicus* and the new *Old Dark House*? Then there are *Pressure Point* and *A Child is Waiting* (surely not both held up so long because *Tom Jones* has stayed on and on at the London Pav?). What about the U.P.A. feature-length cartoon *Gay Purree*—the record of the Harold Arlen score, with Judy Garland, Hermione Gingold and all, has been out a year, and makes the film sound fun. How about *The Reluctant Saint* (Maximilian Schell as St. Joseph Copertino)? Or *Fail Safe*? Or *The Day and the Hour* (Stuart Whitman and Simone Signoret directed by René Clément)? Or a dozen or so Roger Corman's? One wouldn't mind so much if any of these didn't sound considerably more interesting than half the things which are so eagerly and promptly pressed upon us.

ARKADIN

BOOK REVIEWS

LE CINEMA MODERNE, by Gilles Jacob. Illustrated. (Serdoc, Lyon. 18 F.)

TEMPTED BY THE ATTRACTIVE selection of stills printed en bloc at the end of the book into leafing through the last few pages before actually reading the text, it is with some apprehension that one discovers A List. One of those lists, moreover, calculated to send one feverishly ferreting for imbecilities, errors or omissions: for instance, "ANGOISSE ATOMIQUE—*La Dame de Shanghai*, *Le Procès*, *Hiroshima*, *mon amour*, *La Nuit*, *Kiss me Deadly* (*En quatrième vitesse*), *La Dolce Vita*." As it turns out, however, this list is by no means symptomatic of the book itself, and Gilles Jacob (editor of the short-lived *Raccords*, contributor to *Positif*), is untouched by the sort of metaphysical bosh which some *Cahiers* critics find so alluring. Instead, printing as an epigraph Truffaut's sage "L'idéal serait de n'écrire que sur les cinéastes et les films qu'on aime," he writes closely and lucidly about the directors he loves, and tries to illuminate their world through a detailed analysis of the films he considers most characteristic.

"François Truffaut ou un certain sourire." Thus, after a consideration of Truffaut as the most violently iconoclastic denunciator of the pre-Nouvelle Vague cinema, Gilles Jacob defines the director whose first films unexpectedly revealed, not a rude urchin like Godard or Chabrol, but a "prince charmant," ruling a kingdom composed of "fraîcheur, gentillesse, pureté, délicatesse, pudeur." Any critic who can pull out so apposite a phrase to cap a sympathetic study of a director's work is surely worth consideration.

Jacob, however, writes not only attractively but perceptively. In his chapter on Huston, for example, he rescues the director from the *auteur* theory, pointing out quite correctly that even if Huston has recently fallen from grace, this is no reason to consign to hell his good films as well as the later ones. He goes on to examine Huston's cinema under the heading of "Pour une morale du dérisoire"—savouring by the way the derisive malice of Huston's casting of America's most decorated G.I., Audie Murphy, as the coward of *Red Badge of Courage*—as a world in which nothing is so serious that laughter cannot provide a refuge from it, and which contains four stages in its development, "action, épreuves, échec, dérisoire." Action, ordeal, defeat, ridicule—immediately a world is conjured up: the gales of laughter when the Maltese Falcon turns out to be false and the treasure of Sierra Madre is scattered in the winds, the bitter irony when the gunman at last achieves his rural paradise only to die. More particularly, this is an interesting point, suggesting that the last sequence of *The African Queen*, which one had always suspected was a happy end tacked on to palliate that stunning crane shot lifting from the boat to the lake, may in fact be a truly Hustonian ending.

The essays in this book are tenuously linked by the examination of themes which run through modern cinema, such as solitude, impossibility of communication, or duplication of personality (a surprisingly rich theme for Jacob, ranging from *Lola* to *To Be or Not to Be*, from *Plein Soleil* and the mirror reflections of Rita Hayworth in *Lady from Shanghai* to a plausible consideration of Vargas and Quinlan as complementary personalities in *Touch of Evil*). But for the most part the subjects are chosen more or less at random from directors whose work Jacob loves and knows well. On Antonioni, Bresson (*Un Condamné à Mort*), Tati (*M. Hulot*), Dassin, Resnais (*Muriel*), he is brilliant; on Robbe Grillet's *L'Immortelle* and Clément's *Plein Soleil* he is so persuasive that one suspects—and hopes—one may have been wrong. For the rest (Demy, Godard, Losey, etc.), there are only two real disappointments, in the essays on Vigo and Lang, which never get off the ground.

Gilles Jacob may not be a world-shattering critic, but he has a gift for the elliptical aside which illuminates a director's work, on a note of fantasy perhaps, but none the less accurately. For instance, describing the gradual paring down of action and decor, the stripping of inessentials in each of Bresson's films, he notes that in *Un Condamné à Mort* the prison walls are free of stains and graffiti, except for the chalked words "privé de sortie et de nourriture" on the door of the condemned cell. He continues: "le premier acte de Fontaine, une fois démontée sa porte, sera de l'effacer, réalisant le triple objectif de rendre courage au malheureux, fortifier sa propre volonté et respecter l'esthétique de Bresson" (my italics). Bresson, somehow, is there.

TOM MILNE

THE PERSONAL VISION OF INGMAR BERGMAN, by Jörn Donner. Translated by Holger Lundbergh. (Indiana University Press, \$5.95.)

THIS LOOKS AS THOUGH it may well have been rather a good book on Bergman. More than that it is hard to say, considering the extraordinarily stilted and unwieldy English into which it has been rendered for this enlarged American edition. (The Swedish original, *Djävulens Ansikte*, came out in 1962.) Usually, admittedly, a poor translation does not make that much difference; one notes mentally the fact that one is seeing the book through a glass darkly, and then, making the necessary adjustments of attitude, dismisses the matter from mind. But in this case the value of the book, apart from the straight information which it contains and which is mainly gathered together in the bibliography and filmography at the end, lies in its nice critical discriminations. And here one is constantly aware of something which may have been subtly and aptly phrased in the original—which has been highly praised by many readers with fluent Swedish—being turned into commonplace by rendering a key word by vague formula words ("interesting," "unusual"), or turned into nonsense by the translator's failure to make it over into coherent English. In addition, the translator has a tiresome habit of rendering "manuskript" literally as manuscript instead of script, and takes over from the original the mannerism of referring to Bergman simply as "B", which looks odd in English.

The advantages of the book which are not altogether obscured would seem to be two: the great seriousness with which Mr. Donner takes his subject—more seriously than most of us would now take it, but thereby probably providing a useful corrective—and the great pains he goes to in situating Bergman in the international literary and dramatic scene. By doing this, by indicating, often very perceptively, the points of contact between Bergman and Sartre, or Kafka, or Pirandello, or recent American novelists and playwrights, Mr. Donner escapes to a certain extent the problems which always beset writers dealing with the newly out of fashion, particularly the imputation that really they are making much ado about nothing. By placing his subject like this, Mr. Donner leaves us free, if we are not inclined to regard Bergman as such an important artist in his own right, at least to take an interest in him as a phenomenon, a figure who throws light on certain aspects of the Swedish mentality and Swedish intellectual life. For this at least, and for an amount of information about Bergman's abortive projects, statements about his own work and so on, the book is even in its present state useful. The only pity is that its further qualities have been so thoroughly obscured.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

BOOKS RECEIVED

AMPLIFIERS. By H. Lewis York. (*Technique of Sound Reproduction Series*, Focal Press, 42s.)

L'ATTITUDE ACTUELLE DES JEUNES DEVANT LE CINEMA. By L. Lunders. (Editions du C.E.P., Brussels.)

CINEMA EYE, CINEMA EAR. By John Russell Taylor. (Methuen, 30s.)

LA CRISI SPIRITUALE DELL'UOMO MODERNO NEI FILM DI INGMAR BERGMAN. By Massimo Maisetti. (Cineclub Bustese, Varese, Italy.)

DICTIONNAIRE DU CINEMA. By Jean Mitry. (Librairie Larousse, Paris.)

IDEAS FOR AMATEUR MOVIES. By Robert Bateman. (Fountain Press, 6s.)

KEATON ET CIE. By Jean-Pierre Coursodon. (Editions Seghers, Paris, 7.10 Fr.)

LOUIS MALLE. By Henry Chapier. (Editions Seghers, Paris, 7.10 Fr.)

MUTTER JOHANNA VON DEN ENGELN. Script by Jerzy Kawalerowicz. (Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Munich, D.M. 2.50.)

THE OSCAR. By Richard Sale. (Cassell, 25s.)

CORRESPONDENCE

Hong Kong Notes

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—I am grateful to Mr. Shen for pointing out that in "In the Picture" I mistakenly attributed *Madame White Snake* to Li Han Hsang. I garbled my notes, and I apologise to SIGHT AND SOUND readers.

In the rest of his letter Mr. Shen appears to have become confused between art and commerce. He castigates "foreign correspondents" for only writing about Shaws and MP and GI. "We Chinese" think there are three big companies, Shaws, Feng Huang and Great Wall, with MP and GI as a fourth. But in 1962 Feng Huang produced eight movies and in 1963, seven; Great Wall produced in 1962, three movies and in 1963, two; MP and GI produced in 1962, eleven and in 1963, eleven and two co-productions. How does that make MP and GI "fourth"?

Mr. Shen lists several directors and says they are "experienced and respected" like Yueh Fung. Experienced at what, respected by whom? If they are as incompetent and leaden as Yueh Fung seems on the evidence of *Madame White Snake* they had better not be mentioned.

Finally, Mr. Shen's assertion that the biggest box-office grosses are Communist is a mistake. *Guns of Navarone*, *Ben Hur*, and *The Longest Day* all out-grossed *Dream of the Red Chamber* (\$800,000); *Madame White Snake*, *Swiss Family Robinson* and *The Great Escape* all out-grossed *The Jade Hairpin* (\$790,000).

University of Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,
IAN JARVIE

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

SIR,—We are currently preparing a feature length documentary film dealing with the life of Eleanor Roosevelt.

In this connection, we are anxious to view all available motion picture film footage and still photographs relating to Mrs. Roosevelt.

If any of your readers possess such materials, would they please communicate with the undersigned, providing the fullest possible details concerning the nature and source of the film(s) and/or photograph(s).

Sidney Glazier Associates,
300 East Forty-Sixth Street,
New York, N.Y. 10017.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD KAPLAN

Devon Naturalists

SIR,—The Devon Naturalists' Trust has decided to run an 8 mm. film competition open only to the residents of Devon, and we are soliciting your help in launching this project.

It will be confined to 8 mm., and our approach is, we think, a little unusual, inasmuch as we are stipulating the subject matter of the film—the conservation of the countryside—and we include a helpful interpretation of the meaning of conservation on the entry form. If this competition proves successful, it is our hope to make this an annual event with a different theme each year. We know, having some experience of film-making ourselves, that this year's choice of the subject of conservation will prove very difficult to interpret into film, and we look forward to a very wide variety of entries, ranging from the very serious to the hilarious. We feel that the prizes of £50 for first, £25 for second, £15 for third and £10 for fourth are reasonably generous. Entry forms may be obtained from Kenneth Watkins, Butterwick, Harford, Ivybridge, Devon.

Ivybridge,
Devon.

Yours faithfully,
K. WATKINS,
The Devon Naturalists' Trust Ltd.

CORRECTION

We apologise for an error in the Spring number of SIGHT AND SOUND, when we inadvertently assigned two films to a distributor who is not in fact handling them. The films are *I Fidanziati* and *The Lizards*, both distributed by Connoisseur Films/Academy and not, as was incorrectly stated, by Contemporary Films. We regret any inconvenience caused by this mistake.

CINEMA EYE, CINEMA EAR

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John Russell Taylor

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FUGITIVE FROM MURDER

continued from page 127

Psycho, *The Beast with Five Fingers* survives as a grimly effective study in hallucination, with Lorre as a love-starved astrologer pursued and ultimately strangled by a disembodied hand. Almost all Lorre's best American work required an ambiance of fantasy. I never cared for him much as a Gestapo ghoul (*Cross of Lorraine*) or a jeune premier (*The Constant Nymph*); whereas Huston's script and a never-never London provided an ideal setting for *Three Strangers*, in which Lorre's amiable little drunk threw into sharp relief the bloated fraudulence of Greenstreet and the vicious egotism of Geraldine Fitzgerald. Similarly Lorre's sly, crumpled, toad-like aura of fear imprinted its own authenticity upon such otherwise synthetic backgrounds as South Africa (*Rope of Sand*) and the Spanish Civil War (*Confidential Agent*).

* * *

How great an actor was he? Difficult to say. Few of us can have seen him on the stage, and *Der Verlorene* remains infuriatingly out of reach (was it *too* harsh, *too* penetrating, for the Germans to encourage its distribution abroad?). *M*, in its elliptical and tantalising fashion, raises as many questions as it answers. The merest sketch or shadow of a character, its completeness would have been ruined by further exposition. We know Lorre had integrity, uncanny insight, power—but could that power have encompassed less abnormal roles than the Düsseldorf killer? Perhaps, for Brecht, it did. Certainly Lorre was the last man to have shrunk from the higher reaches. His creative instincts cried out incessantly for them, as friends like the German journalist Curt Reiss have recorded in print. Yet he was a victim of his own precocious fame; a fugitive from murder in an age gone mad with murder; too intractably unique in accent, form and expression for producers to reorient their attitude to him. He was too obviously nearly mad. He was too dangerously sane.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WARNER-PATHE for *My Fair Lady*, *The Mask of Dimitrios*.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Paris When It Sizzles*, *Seven Days in May*, *All the Way Home*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Muriel*, *Night of the Hunter*.
UNITED ARTISTS/EON PRODUCTIONS for *Goldfinger*.
M-G-M for *All Fall Down*.
BLC/COLUMBIA for *Crime and Punishment*.
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS/BEAVER FILMS for *Seance on a Wet Afternoon*.
CONNOISSEUR FILMS for *Il Mare*.
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *The Silence*, *Le Feu Follet*.
GALA/FILMS DU CARROSSE/SEDIF for *La Peau Douce*.
CURZON FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Living*.
CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *La Règle du Jeu*.
COMPTON-CAMEO FILMS for *The Spectre*.
COMPTON/SEBRICON for *Lola*.
ROMULUS/HORIZON for *The African Queen*.
KEEP FILMS for *Lord Jim*.
CINERIZ for *Il Deserto Rosso*.
IRIDE CINEMATOGRAFICA PRODUCTIONS for *Prima della Rivoluzione*.
FARO FILM for *Amore in Città*.
SUD PACIFIQUE FILMS for *La Baie des Anges*.
PARC FILM for *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*.
SOVEXPORFILM for *Hamlet*, *Nine Days of One Year*.
TOHO COMPANY for *Tora-no-o*, *Drunken Angel*.
DAIEI COMPANY for *The Idiot*, *Rashomon*.
ISHIHARA INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTIONS for *Alone on the Pacific*.
GESELLSCHAFT FÜR BILDENDE FILME, MUNICH for *Parallelstrasse*.
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PETER M. CLAYBURN for photograph of Japanese cinema.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *Face to Face*.

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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars

- BEAUTY JUNGLE, THE** (Rank) Muffled exposé of the Beauty Queen racket: a Bristol typist (Janette Scott) is tempted to climb the ladder to fame in a bathing-suit, losing her boy-friend and her self-respect on the way. (Ian Hendry, Ronald Fraser; director, Val Guest. Eastman Colour.)
- *BECKET** (Paramount) Extravagant big-screen blow-up of Anouilh's fragile historical charade, with Peter O'Toole and Richard Burton as a capricious Henry II and a solemn Becket. John Gielgud's Louis of France steals most of the honours going. (Donald Wolfit; director, Peter Glenville. Technicolor, Panavision 70.)
- *BEDTIME STORY** (Rank) Marlon Brando and David Niven as Riviera confidence tricksters, acting as partners and rivals in separating gullible ladies from their money. Direction only so-so, but script heartless and acting unfailingly stylish. (Shirley Jones; director, Ralph Levy. Technicolor.)
- CLEOPATRA** (Fox) The film which makes it all too apparent that with £14 million, any amount of assorted talent, extravagant locations, and a plot-line sanctified by Shaw and Shakespeare, it's still possible to make a pretty dull movie. (Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Rex Harrison; director, Joseph L. Mankiewicz. DeLuxe Color, Todd-AO.)
- DO YOU LIKE WOMEN?** (Balch Films) Crazy comedy thriller about a young man involved with occult gang who like to eat women served up with sauce and plenty of vegetables. Few moments of macabre humour, but it should really have been made by Buñuel or Feuilleade. (Sophie Daumier, Guy Bedos, Edwige Feuillère; director, Jean Léon.)
- ***ENFANTS DU PARADIS, LES** (Cinéaste) First showing of the complete version of Carné's evocation of the fabulous Boulevard du Crime in the Paris of Louis-Philippe. Rich, flowery, wholly enchanting, and a must for anyone yet to be enslaved by Garance, Frédérick-Lemaître, Debureau, Lacenaire, Joshua-la-Trompette, Avril and the rest. (Arletty, Jean-Louis Barrault, Pierre Brasseur, Marcel Herrand, Pierre Renoir.)
- FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, THE** (Rank) Serious historical spectacle. In other words, Christopher Plummer, pettishly tossing a goblet into the bath, represents the decadence, while Sophia Loren pouts, Stephen Boyd is stern, and Alec Guinness soliloquises gloomily. Still, the sets are big, there's a nice chariot race and duel, and James Mason. (Director, Anthony Mann. Technicolor, Ultra-Panavision.)
- ***FEU FOLLET, LE** (Gala) Louis Malle's absorbed and devoted adaptation of Drieu la Rochelle's novel about a dipsomaniac who makes a last round of despairing visits to his friends before taking his own life. Some find it more moving than others, but it's quite an achievement anyway. (Maurice Ronet, Jeanne Moreau.) Reviewed.
- FINEST HOURS, THE** (BLC/Columbia) Biography of Sir Winston Churchill, with main attention going to the wartime premiership. Mixture of black and white newsreel with Technicolor locations (Harrow, Chartwell); effect straightforward, non-controversial, rather less than Churchillian. (Director, Peter Baylis.)
- FRENCH DRESSING** (Warner-Pathé) French starlet (actually Austrian Marisa Mell) lured to dour English seaside town, with St. Tropez publicity in mind. Fairly frantic comedy, with a battery of visual tricks after—but a very long way after—the French manner. (James Booth, Roy Kinnear; director, Ken Russell.)
- **GIRL WITH GREEN EYES** (United Artists) Funny and touching tale of Irish teenager (Rita Tushingham) infatuated with middle-aged writer (Peter Finch). Told with rather too many Woodfall flourishes, but genuine warmth and good location camerawork. (Lynn Redgrave; director, Desmond Davis.) Reviewed.
- GLOBAL AFFAIR, A** (M-G-M) Laborious comedy with Bob Hope as a bachelor UN official saddled with an abandoned baby and becoming the centre of international strife. Lilo Pulver has moments as an enticingly practical Russian gynaecologist. (Michèle Mercier, Yvonne De Carlo; director, Jack Arnold. Metrocolor.)
- *HOW THE WEST WAS WON** (M-G-M/Cinéma) Bulging with stars and shivering at the seams, the first Cinéma story film mixes eye-catching spectacle with slabs of static narrative. Ford's Civil War sequence comes closest to taming the giant screen. (Debbie Reynolds, James Stewart, Carroll Baker; directors, Henry Hathaway, John Ford, George Marshall. Technicolor.)
- KISSIN' COUSINS** (M-G-M) Elvis Presley in a dual role as a *Li'l Abner* hillbilly and his cousin, a U.S.A.F. lieutenant who has to talk the former's family into permitting a missile base on their Tennessee mountain. Labourled. (Arthur O'Connell, Glenda Farrell; director, Gene Nelson. Metrocolor, Panavision.)
- **LAWRENCE OF ARABIA** (BLC/Columbia) David Lean, Sam Spiegel and Robert Bolt's massive reconstruction of the desert campaigns. Impeccably academic direction and a genuine response to the setting, but the whole thing has rather the air of a blockbuster in search of a hero. (Peter O'Toole, Alec Guinness, Jack Hawkins, Anthony Quinn. Technicolor, Super-Panavision 70.)
- ***LIZARDS, THE** (Cinéaste) Very promising first feature, dazzlingly shot by Di Venanzo, about the triumphs of sloth in a small Italian town. Subject after Fellini; observation after Olmi: net result engagingly individual. (Director, Lina Wertmüller.)
- **LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT** (Fox) Respectful, though abridged, adaptation of O'Neill's great play. Sure-footed piece of filmed theatre, with everything going into the performances, and the players keeping at it hammer and tongs. (Katharine Hepburn, Ralph Richardson, Jason Robards Jr., Dean Stockwell; director, Sidney Lumet.) Reviewed.
- *MAN IN THE MIDDLE** (Fox) Shrewd piece of situation drama, centred on the court-martial of an American officer who murders a British N.C.O. in wartime India. Excellent performances from Robert Mitchum and Trevor Howard, putting up a stout fight for justice against expediency. (France Nuyen, Barry Sullivan; director, Guy Hamilton. CinemaScope.)
- *MAN'S FAVOURITE SPORT?** (Rank) Rock Hudson, as a fishing expert who has never caught a fish, involved in a series of watery jokes when he is forced to enter the Lake Wakapoozee championship. Howard Hawks directs amiably, but very, very slowly. (Paula Prentiss, John McGiver. Technicolor.)
- MOVING FINGER, THE** (Miracle) Pointless American new wavery, set in Greenwich village with wounded bank robber sheltering among the beatniks, hand-held camera and atrocious dubbing. Best director award, San Francisco Festival, believe it or not. (Lionel Stander, Barbara London, Art Smith; director, Larry Moyer.)
- NEVER PUT IT IN WRITING** (M-G-M) Fey comedy with Pat Boone chasing a lost letter from Ireland to England. Despite the all-location shooting, the Stones make little of it; their style seems to need a much bigger disaster than this. (Fidelma Murphy, Milo O'Shea, Reginald Beckwith; director, Andrew Stone.)
- *NIGHT MUST FALL** (M-G-M) Brave but forlorn effort to transform Emyln Williams' sturdy old melodrama about the head in the hatbox into a modern piece of mood cinema. Narrative keeps on breaking through, despite the most determined efforts to hold it at bay. (Albert Finney, Susan Hampshire, Mona Washbourne; director, Karel Reisz.) Reviewed.
- PARIS WHEN IT SIZZLES** (Paramount) Holden, Hepburn and guest stars in an overlong, over-decorated, rather bitter 'remake' of *La Fête à Henriette*, with Holden as the scriptwriter hacking out a new film. Jokes very occasional. (Tony Curtis, Noel Coward; director, Richard Quine. Technicolor.)
- ***PASSENGER, THE** (Contemporary) Andrzej Munk's reminder, for those who forget, of the reality of the concentration camp. Left unfinished by Munk's death, but completed with stills and commentary to form a grave, haunting puzzle. (Aleksandra Slaska, Anna Ciepielewska.)
- ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS** (Warner-Pathé) Frank Sinatra as a Chicago gangster who accidentally acquires a Robin Hood reputation, then decides to try to live up to it. The Clan supports. Intermittent engaging ideas are promptly smothered by weak direction. (Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Falk; director, Gordon Douglas. Technicolor, Panavision.)
- **SEANCE ON A WET AFTERNOON** (Rank) Intelligently scripted thriller with psychological overtones, about a medium who kidnaps a little girl, intending to prove her powers by "divining" her whereabouts to the world at large. Kim Stanley quite outstanding as the medium, very ably supported by Richard Attenborough. (Director, Bryan Forbes.) Reviewed.
- ***SEVEN DAYS IN MAY** (Paramount) John Frankenheimer's political thriller, Pentagon versus White House. Vigorously intelligent entertainment, very well acted and enlivened by Frankenheimer's way with helicopters, TV screens, and all the gadgetry of the power game. (Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas, Fredric March.)
- ***SILENCE, THE** (Gala) The third in Bergman's recent agonised trilogy appraising God, love and sex. Not exactly a likeable film, but one which commands respect. Beautiful performances by Ingrid Thulin and Gunnar Lindblom as the sisters who tear each other apart. (Håkan Jahnberg, Jörgen Lindström.) Reviewed.
- 633 SQUADRON** (United Artists) R.A.F. Squadron led by American, naturally, raiding rocket fuel factory in Norway. Predictable and rather behind the times. (Cliff Robertson, George Chakiris, Maria Perschy; director, Walter E. Grauman. Technicolor, Panavision.)
- THREE LIVES OF THOMASINA, THE** (Disney) Schmaltzy Disney schmaltz involving a little girl and her pet cat, a vet who doesn't love animals enough, and a witch-girl who does and teaches him a thing or two. (Patrick McGeehan, Susan Hampshire, Karen Dotrice; director, Don Chaffey. Technicolor.)
- TWO ARE GUILTY** (M-G-M) Ludicrously dubbed version of *Le Glaive et la Balance*, in which Cayatte rumbles ponderously about Justice again. Three men are arrested for a crime committed by two of them; investigations fail to reveal which one is innocent, but it is difficult to care much. (Jean-Claude Brialy, Anthony Perkins, Renato Salvatori. Francscope.)
- *WHAT A WAY TO GO** (Fox) Farcical extravaganza of a country girl (Shirley MacLaine) whose inadvertently fatal fascination for rich husbands buries four of them. A lively comic idea (each marriage is seen in pastiche film style) is swamped by heavy direction; good value in star names and set decoration. (Gene Kelly, Robert Mitchum, Paul Newman; director, J. Lee Thompson. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)
- *WORLD OF HENRY ORIENT, THE** (United Artists) Two charming school-girls and their remote control crush on a declining concert pianist (Peter Sellers). The girls are fun, and so is one of the mothers (Angela Lansbury: a debauched lady) but pleasant comedy degenerates into melodrama when the bad mother falls in earnest for Mr. Orient. Lively colour photography of New York. (Paula Prentiss; director, George Roy Hill. Technicolor, Panavision.)



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